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GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT:—
A. F. KIRKPATRICK, D.D.
DEAN OF ELY

ECCLESIASTES

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ECCLESIASTES

IN THE REVISED VERSION
WITH INTRODUCTION & NOTES

BY

A. LUKYN WILLIAMS, D.D.

HON. CANON OF ELY

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PREFACE

BY THE

GENERAL EDITOR FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE present General Editor for the Old Testament in the Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges desires to say that, in accordance with the policy of his predecessor Bishop J. J. S. Perowne, he does not hold himself responsible for the particular interpretations adopted or for the opinions expressed by the editors of the several Books, nor has he endeavoured to bring them into agreement with one another. It is inevitable that there should be differences of opinion in regard to many questions of criticism and interpretation, and it seems best that these differences should find free expression in different volumes. He has endeavoured to secure, as far as possible, that the general scope and character of the series should be observed, and that views which have a reasonable claim to consideration should not be ignored, but he has felt it best that the final responsibility should, in general, rest with the individual contributors.

A. F. KIRKPATRICK.

PREFACE

THE Commentary on Ecclesiastes by Dr Plumptre in this series is so well known, and deservedly so highly esteemed, that it might have seemed desirable to make a few alterations and to republish it in only a revised edition.

This however has proved to be impossible. Since October 1880—forty-two years ago—when Dr Plumptre wrote his preface, so much advance has been made in the study of Hebrew grammar and lexicography, so many changes in our attitude to the Old Testament have come about, and so much attention has been paid to the study of Ecclesiastes itself, that at least an attempt must be made to incorporate the results in a wholly fresh Commentary. Much however has had to be sacrificed, in particular the wealth of illustrations from English literature, of which Dr Plumptre was a master.

The present writer has endeavoured simply to discover the meaning which the author intended to convey to his first readers. Qoheleth was indeed no stylist, nor did he even arrange his subjects in any logical order, but he was patently sincere, charming in character, and devoutly religious, and his thoughts fully repay all the time that is given to them.

How far the contents of the Book are by one and the same man is another question. We cannot be surprised that the tendency to find "sources" and "hands" in every ancient document has spread to the study of Ecclesiastes. But, as will be seen in the Introduction, the

present writer is convinced that with very few exceptions the original author is responsible for the whole.

Readers will observe that in almost all cases Hebrew words have been transliterated. There is unfortunately no system of transliteration uniformly or even generally accepted. Exactness makes such great demands on the resources of the English printing-press, and the time of the compositor, that it has seemed better to adopt in this volume a more simple and less exact form, which, however, will be quite intelligible to the Hebraist. Perhaps the English reader should be reminded that *ch* represents the Hebrew letter ח, and is always to be pronounced like *ch* in the Scottish word *loch*, not like *ch* in *choice*. Unmarked vowels are short.

The writer desires also to express his warm gratitude to the General Editor for the immense pains he has taken with a long manuscript, and for the many suggestions he has made, most of which have been gladly adopted.

A. L. W.

June 1922

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION ix

I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS ix

II. CANONICITY ix

III. DATE AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION . . . xiii

IV. THEORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF THE PRESENT FORM OF THE BOOK xvi

V. THE BOOKS OF ECCLESIASTICUS AND THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON IN RELATION TO ECCLESIASTES xxv

VI. IS ECCLESIASTES DEPENDENT UPON NON-JEWISH PHILOSOPHY? xxx

VII. ITS DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL TEACHING . xxxvi

VIII. WAS THE AUTHOR A SADDUCEE? . . . xlvi

IX. THE AUTHOR—A SUMMARY OF RESULTS . . xlviii

X. TEXT AND VERSIONS l

XI. COMMENTARIES, ETC. liv

TEXT AND NOTES 1

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW TEXT 165

INDEXES 180

INTRODUCTION

I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

THE devout student of the Old Testament, whether he be a Jew, delighting in the revelation of the will of God, and attempting to carry it out in every detail, or a Christian, for whom past, present, and future are illumined by the prophetic Hope, cannot but feel a shock as he turns to the Book of Ecclesiastes. For whatever was the background of the writer's faith, his book shows little acquaintance with the Law and the Former Prophets, and none with the Later Prophets and the Holy Writings, much less with that higher doctrine which was finally revealed in Christ.

Yet it is helpful for certain stages in the religion of a man or of a nation. It comes short, no doubt, of the faith made known in the greater part of the Old Testament, and very far short of the peace and assurance of the New. But it at least insists on the vital part of true religion, implying, as it does, that this lies not in ceremonies, however conscientiously performed, but in the heart-felt acknowledgement of the existence of God, and in the determination to use His gifts to the full, and to obey Him in all that He desires done.

It is not therefore altogether surprising that Cornill can say, "Old Testament piety has never celebrated a greater triumph than in the Book of Qoheleth"[1].

II. CANONICITY

Christians do not appear ever to have had any doubt on this subject, and it is not worth while therefore to quote any other writer than Jerome, who prefixed to the books of Samuel and Kings[2] (the first published parts of his Vulgate,

[1] *Einleitung in die kanonischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, 1905, p. 280.

[2] Ed. Vallarsi, IX. col. 457.

c. 393 A.D.) a Prologue called the *Prologus Galeatus*, the "Helmeted Prologue," because in it he defended himself from attacks for omitting the Apocrypha. After speaking of the first two divisions of the Hebrew Bible, the Law and the Prophets, he continues: "The third division contains the Hagiographa (i.e. the Holy Writings), and the first book begins with Job, the second with David, whom they (the Jews) put in five sections and one volume of *Psalms*. The third is Solomon, having three books: *Proverbs*, which they call Parables, i.e. *Masaloth*; *Ecclesiastes*, i.e. *Coeleth*; the *Song of songs*, to which they prefix the title *Sir assirim*."

Also in his Epistle to Paulinus (I. col. 279), he speaks of the Bible generally, with an epitome of each book, and says: "Solomon, the man of peace, and the beloved of the Lord, corrects manners, teaches nature, joins the Church and Christ, and sings a sweet wedding song of holy marriage." Here, "teaches nature" (*docet naturam*) summarises *Ecclesiastes* as contrasted with *Proverbs* and the *Song of songs*.

Even Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 360—428 A.D.), while attributing to it a low degree of inspiration, for Solomon had not received the grace of prophecy, but only the grace of "prudence"[1], did not try to exclude it from the Canon.

Jerome however himself tells us at the end of his Commentary (III. col. 496) that our book presented such difficulties to the Jews that they thought it should be excluded. "The Hebrews say that although it would seem that among other writings of Solomon which have become obsolete, and the memory of which has perished, this book also ought to be destroyed, for the reason that it affirms that the creatures of God are 'vain,' and considers the whole (universe) to be as nothing, and prefers food and drink and passing pleasures to all else, yet it has from this one chapter (c. xii.) acquired the merit of being received as authoritative, so that it should be included in the number of the divine Volumes. The reason is that it combines its whole argument, and the

[1] "Cum prophetiae gratiam non recepisset, prudentiae vero gratiam." See Podechard, p. 16.

whole list of its contents, in this brief recapitulation, and says that the end of its words is very readily heard, and has nothing difficult about it, namely, that we should fear God, and keep His commandments."

Jerome was writing in Palestine in 388 A.D., in close touch with Jews, and his statements are borne out by Jewish writings. The Mishna of *Yadaim*, III. 5 (6—9) says: "All the Holy Writings defile the hands[1]: the Song of songs and Qoheleth defile the hands. R. Judah says, The Song of songs defiles the hands, but as for Qoheleth there is a difference of opinion. R. Jose says, Qoheleth does not defile the hands, but as for the Song of songs there is a difference of opinion. R. Simeon says, Qoheleth belongs to the lenient decisions of the School of Shammai, but to the severe decisions of the School of Hillel[2]. Simeon ben Azzai said, I received as a tradition from the mouth of seventy two elders on the day that they elected R. Eleazar ben Azariah to (the presidency of) the Assembly (at Jamnia, 95 A.D.) that the Song of songs and Qoheleth defile the hands. R. Aqiba said, God forbid! No man of Israel ever disputed that the Song of songs defiled the hands, for the whole world does not equal the day in which the Song of songs was given to Israel. For all the Writings are holy, and the Song of songs is the holiest of the holy. If they discussed the question it was only about Qoheleth. Jochanan ben Jeshua, the son of R. Aqiba's father-in-law, said: (The facts are) in accordance

[1] "Defile the hands." The origin of this curious expression which is used to denote the holiness, or, as we should say, the canonicity, of a book, was not clear until the last few years. Now we know that in primitive times anything holy was *tabu*, because holiness spread from one thing to another. If therefore one's hands touched anything sacred they afterwards had to be washed ceremonially in order to purify them, lest they in their turn should spread "holiness" further. There does not appear however to be any evidence that such washing after using a canonical book has ever been actually required. (See Oesterley, *The Books of the Apocrypha*, 1914, pp. 175—182). In the Talmud other reasons are given, but when that was composed the knowledge of *tabu* was lost.

[2] The School of Shammai appear to have regarded the book as of little importance; the School of Hillel insisted on its canonicity; it "defiled the hands."

with the words of Ben Azzai. Such was the discussion, and so did they decide." It will be seen that although R. Jose (ben Chananiah), R. Simeon, R. Simeon ben Azzai, R. Aqiba and R. Jochanan ben Jeshua held the discussion about 120 A.D. (as it seems), the matter had really been settled in 95 A.D. The difficulty felt about the book appears to have been purely subjective, as the Tosephta of *Yadaim*, II. 14 implies. R. Simeon ben Mnasya (c. 190 A.D.) says, "The Song of songs defiles the hands, because it was said by the Holy Spirit, Qoheleth does not defile the hands because it sprang from the wisdom of Solomon." Observe that the reputed Solomonic authorship does not, in R. Simeon's opinion, outweigh its mistaken doctrine.

So also T.B. *Sabbath*, 30 *b*, records, on the authority of Rab (died 247 A.D.), the reasons why the canonicity of both Ecclesiastes and Proverbs was disputed, viz. because they each contained apparently contradictory statements, but Ecclesiastes was saved because of its beginning and its end. This served as a warning against rash conclusions in the case of Proverbs. The same page contains an account of Gamaliel ii (c. 100 A.D.) appealing three times to Eccles. i. 9 when refuting the argument of a captious disciple, but as he quotes no special formula when doing so his words are not of importance for our purpose.

We are also told in T.B. *Baba Bathra*, 3 *b*, that when Herod the Great killed most of the teachers of the Law in 37 B.C. he only put out the eyes of Baba ben Buta, and that the latter resisted the temptation of Herod (who disguised himself and urged him to curse the king) by a threefold appeal to Eccles. x. 20, and used at least twice the formula, "it is written"; but the story seems to rest on the authority of R. Chisda, who died as late as 309 A.D.[1]

Another story refers to a still earlier date, the reign of King Jannaeus (104—78 B.C.). In T. J. *Berakoth*), VII. 2 (p. 11*b*) it is stated on the authority of Mishna teachers unnamed that Simeon ben Shetach defended a practical joke which he played on the king by an appeal to Eccles. vii. 12, pre-

[1] It may be found most conveniently in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, II. 392.

facing this by "it is written." It is true that he also appeals to Ecclus. xi. 1, but to that only expressly, not with the merely general formula.

Philo (c. 20 B.C. to c. 45 A.D.) has no clear reference to Ecclesiastes[1] or indeed to Ruth, Esther, the Song of songs, and Daniel, or even to several of the Minor Prophets. It is the same with Josephus (c. 37—c. 100 A.D.), though it is probable that he included it in his twenty-two books of the Canon (*c. Apion*, 1. 8, §§ 39 *sq.*).

The supposed references in the New Testament (especially Rom. viii. 20, Jas. iv. 14) are too vague to be worth considering.

III. DATE AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION

1. *When was the book composed?* The Title ascribes it to King Solomon. But there are too many examples of Jewish books bearing the name of famous men of olden time (e.g. the Book of Enoch) to warrant the acceptance of the attribution without corroboration[2]. Where, as in the present case, there is a complete absence of all external evidence, the language and style of a writing on the one hand, and its contents on the other, afford the only means at our disposal for determining its age.

(i) In Ecclesiastes the evidence of the language is unequivocal. The book contains a large number of words and con-

[1] It is however possible that an allusion to xii. 7 underlies his words: "Abraham, having wept a short time over his wife's body, soon rose up from the corpse; thinking, as it would seem, that to mourn any longer would be inconsistent with that wisdom by which he had been taught that he was not to look upon death as the extinction of the soul, but rather as a separation and disjunction of it from the body, returning back to the region from whence it came; and it came (as is fully shown in the history of the creation of the world) from God" (*De Abrahamo*, § 44, Yonge's translation). The Greek, it should be noted, has no verbal connexion with the LXX.

[2] It used to be supposed that Ecclesiastes was the work of Solomon in his old age, when he had been convinced of the folly of much of his past life. But as A. B. Davidson says, "there is not a word of penitence in the book" (*Enc. Bib.* II. col. 1155).

structions which either are not found at all in any other book of the Bible, or occur only in confessedly late writings, but do occur in the Hebrew of the Mishna (c. 200 A.D.). It is, unfortunately, hardly possible to give English readers satisfactory evidence of the truth of this statement, but the following examples may be mentioned, the Hebrew words for "advantage" and "profit" (i. 3, ii. 11, 13, iii. 9, v. 9 (8), 16 (15), vi. 8, 11, vii. 11 *sq.*, x. 10 *sq.*); Hebrew words with the meaning of "breath" used in a figurative sense (i. 2, ii. 26 and often), of "business," "occupation," or "matter" (iii. 1, 17, v. 8 (7), viii. 6), of a fixed "time," (iii. 2—8, 11, 17, ix. 11). So also there are Aramaising forms which in general indicate late authorship, e.g. i. 2, xii. 8, ii. 25, especially vii. 14, and often. Possibly also some terms indicate the influence of the Greek language, but on this see pp. xxx *sq.*

It may be noted that "under the sun" never occurs elsewhere in the Bible but some 21 times here (e.g. i. 3).

As regards constructions it may be mentioned that one of the commonest biblical constructions, a peculiar use of the word for "and," which *for translation purposes* turns the "future" into the "past," is almost absent (only i. 17, iv. 1, 7), while the use of "and" with an ordinary "past" form to express the past (in English), which is very rare in the best classical Hebrew, is fairly common here (e.g. ix. 14—16).

In fact Delitzsch's verdict, "If the Book of Koheleth were of old Solomonic origin, then there is no history of the Hebrew language"[1], is irrefutable. The evidence of language and style is that Ecclesiastes is very late indeed, probably the latest of all the Hebrew canonical books.

(ii) What of its contents? The attempts to define its exact date by the incident of the kings in iv. 13—16, by x. 16 *sq.*, or even by that of the poor wise man in ix. 13—15, must be pronounced failures. Sufficient data are not given[2]. But when the author says in i. 12, "I Qoheleth was king over Israel in Jerusalem," and in *v.* 16 claims to have gotten great wisdom "above all that were before me in Jerusalem,"

[1] p. 190, E.T.

[2] See the notes on these passages.

he reveals that he is not really Solomon, who was only the second king. Further, the strange phrase "king in Jerusalem" suggests that Jerusalem was then no longer what it once had been.

Neither is the influence of Greek or other foreign philosophic thought so certain that any deduction can be drawn from it[1]. Yet the contents in general do give the impression of a much later date than the time of Solomon. It is true that we know very little indeed about the intellectual culture of his time—probably it is somewhat seriously underrated—and perhaps his cosmopolitanism may have inclined him to forestall the rôle of an Akbar, who encouraged formal discussions between Mohammadans, Christians and Jews. But this is mere guess work. No Hebrew writing which is likely to have been composed as early as the tenth century B.C. shows any trace of the outlook of Ecclesiastes. Besides, the Epilogue clearly places Qoheleth himself among "the Wise" men (xii. 9—11), a phrase denoting serious students of the Jewish religion, although this strict sense cannot be traced earlier than the last three or four centuries before the Christian era. Also vii. 19 implies knowledge of the organisation of the Hellenistic towns. In fact, the evidence of the Contents agrees with that of the Language. Ecclesiastes is a very late composition.

Yet, as will be seen below (pp. xxv—xxviii), it was used by the Son of Sirach, who wrote Ecclesiasticus about 190 B.C. Probably our book was written not very long before that. We may provisionally fix its date about 225—220 B.C.

2. *The place of writing.* It has been argued that the writer had come down from Palestine to Alexandria, where he met with the various forms of philosophic thought to which he is supposed to refer.

Other signs of Egyptian *provenance* are said to be: xi. 5, "where there is doubtless a reference to the famous school

[1] See pp. xxxi *sqq.* It should be borne in mind that Aramaic papyri found at Assouan and Elephantine dating from 492 to c. 400 B.C. contain at least three Greek words, στατήρ, ἀρσενικόν, κιθών.

of anatomy and medicine, and to the scientific discussions carried on in the Museum at Alexandria"; xii. 6, the spinal marrow, the brain, the heart stopping, the blood ceasing to circulate—for it is believed by some that the Egyptians knew the fact of the circulation of the blood; xii. 12, an allusion to the famous Library; xi. 1, a reference to scattering the seed upon lands inundated by the Nile; xii. 5, "the house of eternity," a term belonging to "the recognized Egyptian phraseology for the lower world of shades"[1].

Some of these passages are misinterpreted (see the Commentary). The rest allude to things within every one's knowledge or experience, and have no special reference to Egypt. On the other hand, the allusions to Jerusalem, the Temple, sacrifices, vows, the flora of Palestine, and the very fact that the book was written in Hebrew, all suggest that the author still lived in the Holy Land.

IV. THEORIES OF THE ORIGIN OF THE PRESENT FORM OF THE BOOK

1. One method of accounting for the absence of any orderly development of thought in it is that of the eminent Semitic scholar, G. Bickell. He published in 1884 a small but extraordinarily stimulating pamphlet[2], in which he accounted for the phenomena of Ecclesiastes by supposing that it was originally written in the form of a book, not of a roll, each page containing about 528 characters, and that by a series of accidents its pages became displaced. When these are properly arranged, and some few further adjustments are made, especially the elimination of supposed alterations which were the work of a hostile reader, an orderly scheme is discovered. His arguments, however, assume a MS. in book form, and it is very improbable that

[1] G. A. F. Knight, *Nile and Jordan*, 1921, pp. 445 *sq.*

[2] *Der Prediger über den Wert des Daseins*, 1884. Dr E. J. Dillon in *The Sceptics of the Old Testament*, 1895, accepts all Bickell's arguments, and gives a translation of Ecclesiastes in accordance with them.

such codices were actually in use before the second century A.D.[1] But there seems to be no reason why Qoheleth should not have written his excerpts or notes (*vide infra*, p. xlix) on separate sheets of papyrus, as medical writers seem to have composed their books of prescriptions. So Diogenes appears to have been putting similar sheets together when Alexander stood in his light, and prevented him from seeing their edges[2].

A yet greater difficulty about accepting Bickell's theory is that it depends on too many accidents. But the resultant scheme is so suggestive in itself, and sets forth so clearly many of Qoheleth's thoughts, that it is worth being reproduced in its entirety.

Bickell's Scheme. The Subject of the Book is The Value of Existence

A. *The unreality of its reputedly absolute advantages.*

I. *The affirmation of this.* i. 2—ii. 2.

II. *The Proof.*

(1) As regards *possessions* and the enjoyment made possible by them.

(*a*) Because enjoyment is marred by possessions. ii. 3—11; v. 10 (9)—12 (11).

(*b*) Because possessions are transient. v. 13 (12)—17 (16).

(*c*) Because the capacity for enjoyment is only conditional. v. 18 (17)—vi. 7; iii. 9, 12, 13.

(2) As regards *Knowledge.*

(*a*) Because of its limitation. iii. 10, 11.

(*b*) Because of its depressing results.

(*α*) With reference to the Laws of Nature. iii. 14, 15.

(*β*) With reference to human life and activity. iii. 16—iv. 8; ii. 12 *b*, 17—26.

[1] See T. Birt, *Die Buchrolle in der Kunst*, 1907, pp. 20—22. The term Codex indeed is far earlier, but "meant till the 2nd cent. A.D. a wooden tablet covered with wax, and especially several fastened together."

[2] *Ibid.* p. 221. Dziatzko says that copies of the works of Hippocrates were written on separate sheets of papyrus in the second century B.C. (*Untersuchungen über ausgewählte Kapitel des Antiken Buchwesens*, 1900, p. 44).

(3) As regards *Wisdom as a religious and moral principle.*
(*a*) Because the righteous man receives no preference in his destiny of life and death. ii. 12 *a*, 13—16; iii. 1—8; viii. 6—8.
(*b*) Because he is frequently placed in an inferior position. viii. 9—14, 16 *a*, 17 *a*, 16 *b*, 17 *b*; ix, 1—3; viii. 15.
(4) As regards *Wisdom as prudence and practical acumen.*
(*a*) Because success is dependent on circumstances. ix. 11, 12.
(*b*) Because of the difficulty of getting it recognised. ix. 13—17.
(*c*) Because of the facility with which Folly may paralyse it. ix. 18; x. 1 *b*.
Conclusion, both wise and foolish are dependent on fate. vi. 8, 10—12.

B. *Recommendation of the relatively Good.*

I. *Of Wisdom.*
(1) *As Renunciation.*
(*a*) With reference to claims to happiness. vii. 1 *a*; x. 1 *a*; vii. 1 *b*—6; vi. 9; vii. 7—9, 10, 13, 14.
(*b*) To claims to reputation for perfect justice and wisdom. vii. 15—18. [The practical use of wisdom. vii. 19, 11, 12.]
(*c*) To claims to respect and consideration from others. vii. 21, 22, 20.
(*d*) To claims to be independent of their advice and assistance. iv. 9—12, 13—16.
(2) *As the fear of God* [i.e. true piety].
(*a*) By warning against merely external sacrifices. v. (iv. 17).
(*b*) Against prayer without devotion. v. 2 *sq.* (1 *sq.*).
(*c*) Against hasty vows. v. 4 (3)—6 (5).
(*d*) Against capricious religious speculations. v. 7 (6).
(3) *As activity.*
(*a*) In public life. v. 8 *sq.* (7 *sq.*); x. 16—20.
(*b*) In private life. xi. 1—3, 6, 4, 5.
(4) *As discretion.*
(*a*) Concerning women. vii. 23—29.
(*b*) Concerning the Government. viii. 1—4; x. 2—7
(*c*) Concerning all other relations of life. x. 8—13, 14 *a*, 15.

II. *Of enjoying life.*
x. 14 *b*; ix. 3—10; xi. 7—9 *a*, 10 *a*; xii. 1 *a*; xi. 10 *b*; xii. 1 *b*—3, 4 *b*, 5 *a*—*c*, 6, 8.

2. A second theory, or group of theories, is that the present book is the work of several writers, the later using

the matter of their predecessors, and enlarging or correcting it in accordance with the bias of each. This theory in some rather definite form is accepted by most recent commentators.

Siegfried was the first to draw it out systematically in his commentary published in Nowack's *Handkommentar*, 1898. His theory is that the original book (Q^1, containing i. 3—ii. 12; ii. 14 *b*—24 *a*; iii. 1—10, 12, 15 *sq.*, 18—21; iv. 1—4, 6—8; v. 10 (9) *sq.*, 13 (12)—17 (16); vi. 1—7; vii. 1 *b*—4, 15, 26—28; viii. 9 *sq.*, 14, 16 *sq.*; ix. 2 *sq.*, 5 *sq.*; x. 5—7) was written soon after 200 B.C. by a pessimistic philosopher influenced by Greek thought, and received alterations until about 100 B.C. The second writer (Q^2, adding iii. 22; v. 18 (17)—20 (19); vii. 14, 16; viii. 15; ix. 4, 7—10, 12; x. 19; xi. 7—10; xii. 1 *b*—7 *a*), was a Sadducee inclined to Epicureanism. A third (Q^3, writing ii. 13, 14 *a*; iv. 5; vi. 8, 9 *a*; vii. 11 *sq.*, 19; viii. 1; ix. 13—18; x. 1—3, 12—15) was a *Chākām*, or Wise man, who brought out the importance of Wisdom. A fourth (Q^4, adding ii. 24 *b*—26 *a*; iii. 11, 13, 14, 17; v. 1 (iv. 17)—2 (v. 1), 4 (3)—6 (5), 7 *b* (6 *b*), 8 (7); vi. 10—12; vii. 13, 17, 23—25, 29; viii. 2—8, 11—13; ix. 1; xi. 5, 9 *b*; xii. 1 *a*, 7 *b*), was a *Chāsîd*, or Pious man, who definitely opposed his three predecessors, in the cause of orthodoxy. Under the fifth (Q^5, iv. 9—12; v. 3 (2), 7 *a* (6 *a*), 9 (8), 12 (11); vii. 1 *a*, 5, 6 *a*, 7—10, 18, 20—22; ix. 11; x. 4, 8—11, 16—18, 20; xi. 1—4, 6) are combined many persons whose individual work cannot be further defined. They added proverbial sayings and practical advice. Besides, one Redactor (R^1) arranged the whole of i. 2—xii. 7, adding the Title, i. 1, and the closing formula xii. 8, also other closing formulae, ii. 26; iii. 19, and possibly vi. 9, end; vii. 6 *b*. Then one Epilogist (E^1) added xii. 9 *sq.*, and a second Epilogist (E^2) wrote xii. 11 *sq.* The final words (xii. 13 *sq.*) were added by a Pharisee (R^2). Siegfried's lists and texts differ slightly.

This theory of nine distinct writers, one of whom may comprise many, has served as a basis for further investigation, but has been much simplified by McNeile, from whom Barton, Podechard and Jastrow differ in little more than details. McN. (p. 32) thinks that by far the greater part of the book was written by Qoh. about 200 B.C., and that "two

contemporary writers"—he means contemporary with him —but "totally unlike him in style and tone, were anxious to perpetuate his work," by additions and corrections. Of these, the *Chākām*, or Wise man, added iv. 5, 9—12; vi. 7, 9*a*; vii. 1 *a*, 4—12, 19; viii. 1; ix. 17 *sq.*; x. 1—3, 8—14 *a*, 15, 18 *sq.*; xii. 11 *sq.*; in all some thirty-six verses or parts of verses, mostly *mshālīm*, "more or less isolated apophthegms bearing on life and nature, perhaps culled from various sources." The second, the *Chāsîd*, or Pious man, was grieved with the unorthodoxy of some of Qoheleth's expressions, and added correctives, viz. ii. 26 (except the end); iii. 14 *b*, 17; v. 1 (iv. 17), 2 (1)—7 (6); vii. 18 *b*, 26 *b*, 29; viii. 2 *b*, 3*a*, 5, 6 *a*, 11—13; xi. 9 *b*; xii. 1 *a*, 13 *sq.*, in all some twenty-four verses or parts of verses. To these must be added the first Editor, who added i. 1 *sq.*; xii. 8—10, and the fourth Glossator, ii. 26, end; vii. 6 *b*.

This modified theory in itself is not unreasonable, and is constantly borne in mind throughout this commentary. It rests entirely on the subjective impression made by the various parts of Ecclesiastes, and with a different exegesis the impression also differs. The present writer believes that in not a few cases the connexion of thought is closer than McNeile supposes, and, as will be seen, he gravely doubts the existence of both the *Chākām* and the *Chāsîd* as such.

One point in particular seems to him not to have been sufficiently considered, the question of language and style. Siegfried thinks the composition of the book extended over about a hundred years, and that it was written by persons of very different schools of thought. McNeile indeed places its composition within, apparently, some ten years, but regards those who wrote the various parts as differing *toto caelo* among themselves. Qoheleth himself belonged to one section of the community, an unorthodox section; the *Chākām* lived among a group whose study was largely that of proverbial sayings with "a frigid didactic style"; the *Chāsîd*, as one of the "unco-guid," had very little in common with Qoheleth. If this represents the real state of the case surely their speech will bewray them. But what do we find? If any one will go through the elaborate lists in Siegfried of

words and phrases either peculiar to Ecclesiastes or nearly so, he will not be able to discover any difference between the three authors, save only that the writings of the *Chākām* have a greater proportion of such words and phrases than the other two, which is only to be expected in proverbs[1].

It is not so easy to examine style, for the personal equation of the judge is too large. But if one takes the examples of style compiled in König's *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die Biblische Litteratur komparativisch dargestellt* (1900) for quite a different purpose, and examines its 129 references to Ecclesiastes, he finds precisely the same results[2]. There

[1] The results of an examination of McNeile's theory of the *Chākām* and the *Chāsîd*, as tested by the lists of forms in Siegfried's *Commentary*, pp. 13—23, may be tabulated as follows:

Subject	Total examples	No parallel	Parallels with: The Chākām	Parallels with: The Chāsîd	Parallels with: Qoheleth proper
Grammar					
Chākām	8	1	—	2	7
Chāsîd	5	—	2	—	5
Syntax					
Chākām	8	2	—	2	6
Chāsîd	15	4	2	—	11
Lexical					
Chākām	22	15	—	2	7
Chāsîd	10	5	2	—	5
(Siegfried's lists of Aramaising forms and Graecisms are too unsatisfactory to be of use for this purpose)					
Phrases of style					
Chākām	5	—	—	1	5
Chāsîd	8	—	1	—	8

Observe that there is no example of anything common to the *Chākām* and the *Chāsîd* only. In other words the numbers contained in the two columns headed "The *Chākām*" and "The *Chāsîd*" are included in the last column, "Qoheleth proper."

[2] The total number of verses in Ecclesiastes is 222. McNeile attributes to Q. (Qoheleth proper) 172 *vv.* or parts of verses, to

is no real difference between the supposed authors of Ecclesiastes in language and style. This would be almost impossible if the composition of the book extended over a hundred years, and is very improbable even if the authors were contemporary, but belonged (*ex hypothesi*) to different schools of thought. Language and style, that is to say, strongly confirm the essential unity of authorship. Subsequent additions may be important, but they must be small in extent, smaller than even McNeile's theory requires.

When we come to consider the contents, as contrasted with the language and the style, of the verses assigned to the *Chākām* and the *Chāsîd*, there is more room for doubt, for it is said that they break up, or even contradict, their context. Though we must refer our readers to the Notes for a fuller study of each passage it may be convenient to sum up here the results of our investigation.

the *Chākām* 36, to the *Chāsîd* 24. In the case of the *Chākām*, König refers to 14 different verses, often more than once, giving in all some 25 references to words attributed by McNeile to the *Chākām*. Of these 3 are a purely negative character, included merely with the object of saying that they do *not* come under a certain heading. Of the remaining 22 references at most 7 have no parallels in other "sources" of the book, leaving 15 which have parallels with either Q. or the *Chāsîd*. The proportion 7 to 15 is high, but not more than we should expect from the nature of the *Chākām*'s verses, so many of which are proverbs. It is difficult to judge exactly, but the evidence of König, taken as a whole, would seem to be against there being any difference of style between the *Chākām* and the other two "sources."

The case of the *Chāsîd* is clearer. McNeile attributes to him 24 verses or parts of verses. Of these König refers to 6, giving 8 references in all. Of these 4 seem only negative or irrelevant, and of the remainder 3 have parallels with Q. and 1 with the *Chākām*.

To the *First Editor* McNeile attributes 5 verses or parts of verses. König refers to 2 verses of which 1 has a parallel with the *Chākām*, and 1 has none in this book.

To the *Fourth Glossator* McNeile allots parts of 2 verses, to 1 of which König refers. It has many parallels in Q.

The *Chākām*.

iv. 5. Suits the context very well.

9—12. So also do these verses.

vi. 7. And this. One cannot assume that Q. would never use a proverb.

9 *a*. This also is suitable.

vii. 1 *a*. This is more difficult, for the meaning is not very suitable in this context. But it may well have belonged to a collection of proverbs beginning with "Better than," which lasts until *v*. 12, and was inserted here by Q. because of the connexion with "good" in the preceding verse (vi. 12).

4—6 *a*. McNeile (p. 23) says, "The spirit of these *meshalim* is quite different to Ḳoheleth's bitterness when he states that sorrow is more fitting than merriment to the miserable heart of man." Even if this be true the difficulty is solved by the theory mentioned in the preceding sentence.

7—12. McNeile has the company of Delitzsch and many others in thinking that this passage has no connexion with the preceding verses. But if, as seems probable, *v*. 6 *b* introduces it, the connexion is obvious.

19. This indeed is certainly a gloss. It may have been added originally to *v*. 12, or, more probably, have been part of *v*. 12 in its original setting.

viii. 1. This forms an excellent introduction to the following subject.

ix. 17, 18, x. 1—3. These consecutive verses are proverbial sayings about Wisdom. *V*. 17 was suggested by the end of *v*. 16, and *v*. 18 in its turn suggests *vv*. 1—3. There seems to be no sufficient reason to suppose an intrusion.

x. 8—15. *Vv*. 8, 9. The connexion with the preceding verse is uncertain, but Ecclesiasticus seems to have known *v*. 9 in its present context. *Vv*. 10, 11 follow *v*. 9 closely in thought. Q. may well have included them himself.

Vv. 12—15. Fools and their talk. The verses form a good pendant to the subject of Wisdom.

Vv. 18, 19. These again form a not unnatural pendant to *vv*. 16, 17.

xii. 11, 12. It is not intelligible why these verses should

not belong to the author of the Epilogue. They suit his position admirably, as both Disciple and Teacher in his turn.

It will have been observed that of these passages vii. 19 is the only one that may without any doubt be assigned to another author than Q., and that its origin may be accounted for on much simpler lines than a formal Redactor. The more the *Chākām* is examined the more shadowy he becomes.

The *Chāsîd*.

The subject-matter of the *Chāsîd* is more germane to our inquiry, for we have not so much a question of interrupting the argument of Q. as of contradicting it.

ii. 26 *a*. This concrete illustration of everything being derived from God, and of a form of retribution, is a parenthesis, but is not necessarily in contradiction to Q. See below, pp. xxxvii, xxxix.

iii. 14 *b*. There is no reason to consider this an interruption.

17. This reference to a future judgement hardly fits Q.

v. 1—7 (iv. 17—v. 6). Why this collection of proverbs is attributed to the *Chāsîd* is not self-evident. It refers indeed to external religion, but it is hard to see why a believer in God, such as Q. undoubtedly was, should not have included it in his book.

vii. 18 *b*. This suits the context excellently when rightly explained.

26 *b*. This also suits the context. 29. And this.

viii. 2 *b*, 3 *a*, 5, 6 *a*. So also these verses.

11–13. Eventually the wicked are punished. This passage is perhaps the strongest of all in favour of the existence of the *Chāsîd*. For it certainly stands in contradiction to statements made by Q.

xi. 9 *b*, xii. 1 *a*. God will judge. Although Q. believed in God (e.g. xi. 5, xii. 7) yet he seems to have doubted God's exercise of judgement. Hence these passages favour the existence of the *Chāsîd*.

xii. 13, 14. The same argument applies to these two verses, save that apparently *v.* 13 was used by the author of Ecclesiasticus (xliii. 27).

It will be observed that the only verses which support at

all strongly the theory of the existence of the *Chāsîd* are those which express belief in the exercise of judgement upon men by God, either here or hereafter (iii. 17; viii. 11—13; xi. 9 *b*; xii. 1 *a*, 13, 14). It is probable that in fact they are additions to Qoheleth's original collection. But it is not necessary to postulate any one else as their author than the friend and pupil of Qoheleth, who after his death published his work, and added the Title, i. 1, perhaps the Theme, i. 2, and certainly the Epilogue, xii. 9—14. The notes attributed to the "Fourth writer" (ii. 26 *b*; vii. 6 *b*) are probably part of the original Q. See the Notes.

In brief, Qoheleth himself wrote the portions attributed by McNeile to Qoheleth and the *Chākām*, and perhaps part of those assigned to the *Chāsîd*. But someone else, probably the Editor who supplied the Title, Theme, and Epilogue, added the other sayings of the *Chāsîd*[1].

V. THE BOOKS OF ECCLESIASTICUS AND THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON IN RELATION TO ECCLESIASTES

1. Ecclesiastes and Ecclesiasticus[2].

It has long been known that these two books have many details in common, but the discovery of the greater part of the original Hebrew of the latter in 1896—1900 (though the fragments are not free from textual errors) gave a fresh impetus to the study of their relation to each other.

This may be considered from three points of view: first, the verbal agreement of the Hebrew; secondly, similar agreement, so far as it can be traced, between the Hebrew of

[1] On the possibility that iii. 21 is an interpolation by a materialistic reader see p. xlv, note.

[2] The accidental similarity of names is unfortunate. *Ecclesiastes* is the translation of the word *Qoheleth* adopted by the Septuagint, meaning a member of a public assembly. *Ecclesiasticus* means the book which, although uncanonical, was read in the Christian *ecclesia*. Probably Christians did not care to speak of it by the name of its author, Jesus, the son of Sirach, and if they had called it by its title, Wisdom, it would have been confused with the Wisdom of Solomon.

Ecclesiastes and the Greek of Ecclesiasticus, where the Hebrew of the latter is no longer extant; and thirdly, agreement not extending to words but to thought only. It is not necessary to give more than a few examples under each heading.

(1) *Agreement in Hebrew*[1].

Eccles. iii. 15	Ecclus. v. 3
God will seek again what has been driven away.	The Lord avengeth the persecuted.

Although the English is very different, the Hebrew is almost identical[2], but Ecclesiasticus is little more than a play on the true meaning of Ecclesiastes. The priority of Eccles. is shown by the fact that the interpretation as given by Ecclus. would be meaningless in Eccles., though passable in Ecclus.

Eccles. viii. 1	Ecclus. xiii. 25
The harshness of his countenance shall be changed.	The heart of a man changeth his countenance.
Eccles. viii. 4	Ecclus. xxxvi. 8 (10)
And who shall say unto him, What doest thou?	For who may say to Thee, What art Thou doing?

Qoheleth was referring to an earthly king, but Ecclus. misinterprets, and applies the words to God. Ecclus. however may have taken the phrase from Job ix. 12.

Eccles. xii. 7	Ecclus. xl. 11
And the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it (cf. iii. 20, 21).	All things that are from the earth return to the earth, and that which is from on high [returneth] on high.

Other possible parallelisms are Eccles. iii. 1 (Ecclus. iv. 20); iii. 11 (xxxix. 16, 33); vii. 8 (v. 11); vii. 12 (xiv. 27); vii. 16

[1] Both here and throughout the section the translation of Ecclus. is that of Oesterley, *The Wisdom of Ben-Sira*, S.P.C.K., 1916. His margin shows distinctly whether he is translating from the Hebrew text as edited by Smend, or the Greek text of Swete.

[2] Eccles. is *Hā'elôhîm ybaqqēsh 'eth nirdāph*; Ecclus. is *YHVH mbaqqēsh nirdaphîm*, which is, literally, "The Lord seeketh men driven away."

(vii. 5); vii. 28 (vi. 6); viii. 5 (xxxvii. 12); ix. 10 (xiv. 11, 12); xii. 9 (xxxvii. 22 *sq.*); xii. 13 (xliii. 27).

It will be observed that the parallel passages are to be found in all parts of Eccles., regardless of the sources into which our book is often divided (*vide supra*, pp. xvi–xxv). Eccles. plainly existed in its present shape when Jesus ben Sirach wrote (c. 190 B.C.).

(2) *Agreement between Eccles. (Hebrew) and Ecclus. (Greek), where the Hebrew is not extant.*

Eccles. iii. 14, 11	Ecclus. xviii. 6
To it one cannot add, and from it one cannot take away.	No man can take [from them] nor add [to them],
A man cannot find out the work that God hath done.	nor can any trace out the marvellous acts of the Lord.
Eccles. viii. 17	Ecclus. xviii. 7
I saw all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work which hath been done under the sun, forasmuch as the man may toil in inquiring, yet will not find out, and also if the wise man purposes to know it, he will not be able to find out.	When a man hath finished, then doth he but begin, and when he ceaseth he is in perplexity.

Compare also Eccles. v. 4 (Ecclus. xviii. 22); viii. 12 (i. 13); x. 8 (xxvii. 26).

(3) *Agreement of thought only.*

Eccles. iii. 1—8, 11	Ecclus. xx. 6 *sq.* (Heb.); xxxix. 33 *sq.* (Heb.)
Everything has its proper time.	
Eccles. iv. 8	Ecclus. xiv. 4 (Heb.); xi. 19 (Heb.)
After self-denying toil one's property to go to another! cf. vi. 1 *sq.*	
Eccles. v. 6 (5)	Ecclus. xviii. 22 (Greek)
Vows.	

Both writings develope Deut. xxiii. 21—23 but not in the same way, and Ecclus. appears to have also used Eccles. With the many passages in which Eccles. recommends enjoyment of this present life (ii. 24 *sq.*, etc.) compare Ecclus. xiv. 1—19 (Heb.); xxx. 23 (Heb.).

Compare also Eccles. v. 2 (1) (Ecclus. vii. 14); v. 12 *b* (11 *b*) (xxxiv [xxxi]. 1; vii. 8 *b* (v. 11); vii. 12 *a* (xiv. 26 *sq.*); vii. 14 (xxxvi [xxxiii]. 14 *sq.*); vii. 20—22 (xix. 10, 16); vii. 26 *b* (xxvi. 23); viii. 11—13 (v. 4—7); ix. 16 (xiii. 22); x. 12 (xxi. 27).

The same remark applies here, that all parts of our present Ecclesiastes are represented in Ecclesiasticus.

(4) *Sometimes Ecclus. seems purposely to rebut statements of Eccles.*

So Ecclus. xli. 11—13 affirms that a man's good name is long remembered on earth (contrast Eccles. i. 11; ii. 16; viii. 10; ix. 5).

2. Ecclesiastes and the Wisdom of Solomon.

It has been asserted, with no little confidence, that the author of the Wisdom of Solomon (chs. i.—ix., c. 50 B.C., and chs. x.—xix. before 50 A.D.) knew and joined issue with the book of Qoheleth. The chief passage on which reliance is placed for making this assertion is Wisd. ii. 1—9. It may be granted at once that some of the phrases there do recall, and were even intended to recall, phrases found in Ecclesiastes. In particular are

Wisdom[1]	Ecclesiastes
ii. 1 Short and sorrowful is our life and there is no healing at the last end of man, and none was ever known that returned from Hades.	ii. 23 For all his days his occupation is sorrows and vexation. viii. 8 There is no power over the day of death, nor is there substitution in (that) war.
v. 2 By mere chance were we born.	iii. 19 The sons of men are a chance.

[1] The translation of Oesterley, S.P.C.K., 1917, is followed.

v. 4 And our name will be forgotten in time, and no man will remember our works.	i. 11 There will be no remembrance of them among those that come after. ii. 16 There is no remembrance of the wise man, together with the fool. ix. 5 The memory of them is forgotten.
v. 5 For our life is the passing of a shadow.	vi. 12 The days of his breath-like life, for he maketh them like a shadow. Cf. viii. 13.
v. 6 Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things there are,	ii. 24 There is nothing better in the case of a man than that he should eat and drink and let himself find pleasure in his toil. (And so, often.)
and let us make use of creation to the full as in youth.	xi. 9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart gladden thee in the days of thy youth.
v. 7 With...perfumes let us fill ourselves.	ix. 8 Let not oil be lacking on thy head.
v. 9 Enjoyment, for this is our portion, and this is our lot.	ix. 9 Enjoy life...for that is thy portion in life and in thy toil which thou toilest under the sun. (See also iii. 22; v. 18 (17).)

Yet thus to take the phrases separately is misleading. They give quite a different impression when considered in their context. For in Wisdom it is clear that the ungodly are speaking, and ungodly of such a kind as to resolve in the next verses, "Let us oppress the righteous poor man, let us not spare the widow, nor reverence the hoary locks of the aged; let our might be our law of right" (*vv.* 10, 11). But can we imagine anything further from the tone of our book? Could the author of the Book of Wisdom really have intended to

attack Ecclesiastes, when he could have seen at a glance how contrary the utterances of the ungodly which he quotes were to the mind of Qoheleth? It is much more probable that he was writing against such opposition to the truth and to right ethics as is common to the worldly minded of all ages and places. These may indeed sometimes use, knowingly or unknowingly, terms taken from Ecclesiastes. But that is the utmost that can be granted. In brief, the materialists attacked by the Book of Wisdom were persons who, by mental calibre, religious faith, or rather the want of it, and lack of practical sympathy, were quite other than the patient, God-fearing, and kindly author of the book of Ecclesiastes.

VI. IS ECCLESIASTES DEPENDENT UPON NON-JEWISH PHILOSOPHY?

Such dependence is not unlikely. For after the battle of Issus (333 B.C.) and Alexander's visit to Palestine (332) Syria and the East were overrun with Greeks, and Greek thought must have circulated in every quarter. Dr Mahaffy says that about 200 B.C. "all ambitious Jews learned Greek, and went to study manners, and spend money, at Antioch or Alexandria"[1]. No doubt among the old guard of Judaism it would find no entry, but one cannot suppose that Qoheleth belonged to these. On the contrary, from all that we can learn of him, his mind was singularly open, and would not reject anything merely because it was not Jewish. The only question is, What evidence of foreign influence does the book itself supply?

This may be considered in two aspects, the employment of technical words and phrases, and the presence of certain modes of thought.

1. The majority of the words or phrases that have been adduced in evidence carry little weight. The strongest are as follows.

Under the sun. But this is not necessarily taken from the Greek. See i. 3, note.

[1] *The Progress of Hellenism in Alexander's Empire*, 1905, p. 104.

To do good (A.V., R.V., text), in iii. 12. That this is not to be understood in an ethical sense is shown in the note. But is it, as is asserted, a translation of the Greek εὖ πράττειν, "have good success," into very bald Hebrew? Possibly, but not necessarily so, in the face of the converse phrase for "to be in a bad way" in 2 Sam. xii. 18. In any case the Greek phrase is not confined to philosophic treatises.

Good and comely, v. 18 (17). This is said to be a translation of καλὸν κἀγαθόν. But the Hebrew is less simple than the English, and the right translation of the clause is "that which I have seen to be good, that it is comely (for a man) to eat," etc.

All, in "All hath been heard" (xii. 13). This has been quite wrongly interpreted as "the general rule," and as a reminiscence of Greek philosophy, τὸ καθόλου, or τὸ ὅλον.

The fact is that the terminology of Greek philosophers, and even the Greek language generally, seem to have had no appreciable effect on the language of our book.

2. Has then Greek philosophy had any influence on its modes of thought?

First, as regards Stoicism, which was widely spread in the Levant from 300 B.C. onwards, and the founder of which (Zeno of Citium, 340--260 B.C.) may have been of Phoenician descent. Mr Tyler (p. 11) says, "The evidence is such as, I think, can scarcely leave any reasonable doubt concerning the matter." For example, "The Catalogue of the Times and Seasons" (iii. 2—8), with its context, may be "a setting forth of the Stoic moral principle of 'living conformably to Nature.'" But the passage can hardly mean that everything must occur at a fixed time, in agreement with the determinism of the Stoics, as McNeile says (p. 47). Again, in iii. 15 and elsewhere, there are said to be references to the Stoic doctrine of cycles[1]. Similarly, "All is vanity" resembles the saying of the great, though post-Christian,

[1] Tyler afterwards calls attention to the fact that the pre-Stoic philosopher Heraclitus (c. 500 B.C.), whom Diels calls "the profoundest thinker before Plato" (*E.R.E.* VI. 591), imagined rather a stream of fire descending as the world is evolved into being,

Stoic, Marcus Aurelius, "In this way you will come to look on all things as smoke and nothingness" (*Meditations*, x. 31). Again, according to the Stoics, folly is madness. "They say that...all fools are mad" (Diog. Laert. VII. 124), and in Eccles. ii. 12 and elsewhere "madness" and "folly" are closely connected.

We may further compare, especially with vii. 29, the *Hymn to Zeus* by Cleanthes (331—232 B.C.), "the second Greek president of the Stoic school," part of which is

> O King of Kings
> Through ceaseless ages, God, whose purpose brings
> To birth, whate'er on land or in the sea
> Is wrought, or in high heaven's immensity;
> Save what the sinner works infatuate[1].

Yet although these parallels from Stoic writers are interesting illustrations of our book, the evidence of the author's

and ascending when it is resolved again into pure fire (pp. 26 *sq.*).

One of Heraclitus' sayings is worth mentioning in this connexion. "Wisdom consists in one duty and only one—to understand the Intelligence (γνώμη) which governs all things" (Frag. 41, Diels, *E.R.E.* VI. 592).

McNeile (p. 45) has made the interesting suggestion that the influence of Xenophanes (c. 570 –484 B.C.) may be seen in iii. 20, for Xenophanes says, "From earth all things are, and to earth all things return," and in vii. 23 *sq.*, viii. 17, for he says, "No man hath certainly known, nor shall certainly know, that which he saith about the gods and about all things: for be that which he saith ever so perfect, yet doth he not know it; all things are matters of opinion....That which I say is opinion like unto truth....The gods did not reveal all things to mortals in the beginning: long is the search ere man findeth that which is better." But of these two quotations, which constitute nearly half of the religious fragments that survive, the first is a platitude, self-evident to most, and the second does not stand in any very close relationship to the passages in Ecclesiastes. Again, Qoheleth is no pantheist, but Dr H. Jackson thinks that Xenophanes probably was. (See the article in the *Enc. Brit.* to which McNeile refers.)

[1] Dr James Adam's translation in R. D. Hicks, *Stoic and Epicurean*, 1910, p. 15. See also Prof. W. L. Davidson in *E.R.E.* III. 688, and *infra* on Eccles. vii. 14.

dependence on them, or on Stoicism in general, is far from convincing. If he knew Greek, which considering his date and place must be assumed, he cannot have failed to learn something of the philosophical thought of Hellenism. Stoicism must have been in the air; its phrases would be current coin. But that is all.

Secondly, Epicureanism (Epicurus, 341—270 B.C.). It is said that iii. 18—22 is due to the influence of Epicurus, for he denies any superiority to men over beasts, both having come from the dust and returning to dust, and he asserts that no special Divine care is manifested on man's behalf, and also that man would do well to draw the utmost possible enjoyment from the world.

Again, of v. 18 (17)—20 (19) it is said that Qoheleth recommends "that ἀταραξία, that perfect tranquillity which the Epicureans so highly esteemed," and further, that the phrase (as translated by Tyler), "God is making answer to the joy of his heart," suggests the Epicurean doctrine that Gods and wise men live in an analogous manner, and enjoy the same kind of happiness, and so "they may not unnaturally be conceived of as responsive choirs, singing alternate or harmonious strains"[1].

But neither of these passages is at all conclusive. The first may be derived from Genesis, and the second is very vague, and rests in part on a mistranslation. See the note on v. 20 (19).

Similarly Plumptre[2], insisting strongly on the knowledge of Epicureanism by Qoheleth, refers to parallels of thought and expression in Lucretius and Horace, who "are for us the representatives of Epicurean thought as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius are of Stoic, and the parallelisms of language and idea which these writers present to the book now before us, may legitimately suggest the conclusion that they drank from a common source. We note accordingly that the Debater is acquainted with the physical science of Epicurus as represented by Lucretius. They speak in almost identical terms of the phenomena of the daily rising and setting of the sun, of the rivers flowing into the sea, and returning to their

[1] Tyler, pp. 20—22.

[2] pp. 31 *sq.*

source (i. 5, 6). Their language as to the dispersion at death of the compound elements of man's nature (chs. iii. 19, 20, xii. 7); as to our ignorance of all that comes after death (ch. iii. 22); as to the progress of man in the arts of civilized life (ch. vii. 29); as to the nature of man standing, as far as we know, on the same level as that of beasts (ch. iii. 18, 19), presents an identity of tone, almost even of phrase. Still more in accord with popular Epicureanism as represented by Horace is the teaching of Koheleth as to the secret of enjoyment, consisting in the ἀταραξία (tranquillity) of a well regulated life (chs. ii. 24, iii. 22, v. 18, ix. 7), in the avoidance of passionate emotions and vain ambitions, and anxious cares, in learning to be content with a little, but to accept and use that little with a deliberate cheerfulness (chs. v. 11, 12, 19, vii. 14). Even the pessimism of the Epicurean, from which he vainly seeks to find a refuge in this *poco curante* life, is echoed by the Debater. The lamentations over the frailty and shortness of man's life (ch. vi. 4, 5, 12), over the disorders which prevail in Nature and in society (chs. v. 8, vii. 7, viii. 9, 14, ix. 16, x. 16–18), the ever-recurring burden of the 'vanity of vanities' (chs. i. 2, 17, ii. 26, iv. 16, viii. 10, ix. 9, xi. 10, xii. 8), are all characteristic of the profounder tendencies of the same school, which culminated in the '*tanta stat praedita culpa*' of Lucretius (II. 181)."

Tyler also makes a point out of the fact that as "in the history of philosophy the appearance of Stoicism and Epicureanism is nearly simultaneous, the Stoical and Epicurean elements appear also *together* in Ecclesiastes"[1].

It is also rather strangely asserted that the phrase "of making many books there is no end" (xii. 12) alludes to the multiplicity of books written by Epicurus (300 rolls), and later by Apollodorus (400 works) and Chrysippus (705).

On the whole there is, in reality, even less to be said for the influence of Epicureanism on Qoheleth than for that of Stoicism. Qoheleth must have known something of it, but he does not seem to have been interested in it.

It has also been suggested that Qoheleth was influenced by the teaching of Pyrrho (born c. 360 B.C.), the founder of

[1] p. 24, cf. p. 29.

the Sceptical school. He believed that it is impossible to know things as they are in reality (cf. i. 17 *sq.*; ii. 13—15; iii. 11; vii. 14), and therefore we can be certain of nothing, and must withhold our judgement (cf. viii. 17). Hence the absence of all activity is the true ideal. Pyrrho indeed seems to have carried this to an extreme, for once when his friend and teacher Anaxarchus fell into a pond, he passed on without going to his assistance, and, when some blamed him, Anaxarchus himself commended his indifference and absence of affection (see Prof. J. Burnet in *E.R.E.* xi. 228 *sq.*). But the incident shows that even if Pyrrho's teaching had any influence upon Qoheleth (which is hardly probable), the two differed *toto caelo* in character and practical ethics. The signs of Scepticism (in the technical sense) in our book are even more indistinct than those of Stoicism and Epicureanism[1].

Dr Dillon[2] is of opinion that the book owes a good deal to Buddhism, propagandists of which were sent by Asoka about the year 250 B.C. to all parts of the civilised world, including Syria and Egypt. Yet no clear signs of the distinctive doctrines of Buddhism can be seen in it, e.g. the renunciation of the world, Kharma or strict Justice (involving the transmigration of souls), Nirvana, etc. Even the words in ix. 5, "for the living know that they will die, but the dead know not anything," refer to the passive relation of a dead man to things on earth, not to his absolute unconsciousness. See the note there.

The fact of the matter is that we cannot look upon Qoheleth as a philosopher in the technical sense of the word. If he had any training in Greek philosophy his book shows hardly any sign of its effect upon him. The passages which have been adduced in favour of his possessing deep philosophical thought, and of his regarding the universe in a strictly philosophical way, have been for the most part wrested from their context, and in other cases do not bear the weight that has been laid upon them.

[1] Dr A. B. Davidson in *Enc. Bibl.* II. coll. 1160, 1162, is very strongly opposed to the belief in Hellenistic influence upon Eccles

[2] *Op. cit.* pp. 122—129.

Qoheleth was a Jew, and the bases of his thoughts were Jewish. He was high-principled and a scholar, with a very tender and sympathetic heart, grieved at men's trials bodily and mental, and, discarding the traditional and official answers to his difficulties, asked himself only what should best be done by a man in this short life. The reality of God—a personal God—was assumed, and Qoheleth was interested in one question only, What is the relation of man to Him in the world which seems to be ever changing, and yet is ever the same? Qoheleth was not a profound thinker, and hardly troubled himself at all about the state of the soul after death—apart from the mere negativeness of its relation to things on earth. He only wanted to know how God desired man's time on earth to be spent. His aim was practical.

VII. THE DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL TEACHING OF THE BOOK[1]

It is not easy to arrange this under proper headings, scattered as it is throughout, but perhaps the simplest arrangement is the best: (1) The Doctrine of God, with His relation to the world and man here and hereafter, together with incidental notices of the Temple, the Sacrifices, etc. (2) The Doctrine of Man, the purpose of his existence, his character, his duties, and his relation to others. To this section has been added the subject of Death and the Beyond.

It will be noticed that throughout the book Israel as such is not mentioned, either in its nationality or as the object of Divine promises; nor the Messiah. The latter omission is the more important, for had the author looked forward to His coming this hope would almost certainly have been apparent when he was dwelling upon present injustice.

1. The Doctrine of God.

i. Qoheleth's belief in God was fundamental. Like every writer in the Old Testament Canon, not excluding the author

[1] References to those few portions of Ecclesiastes which were not written by Qoheleth but by the Editor (see p. xxv) are indicated by clarendon type.

of the Book of Esther, he assumes the existence of God. He does not indeed use the title of LORD (*Yahweh*), or even of Lord (*'adonai*), perhaps because in the case of the former he is not interested in the relation of Israel, either as nation or as Church, to the Eternal, and in that of the latter because he never connects religion with the idea of subordination and service, but he uses the term God (*Elohim*) about forty times, and refers indirectly to Him very often. In fact every part of the book, save perhaps chs. iv. and x., is permeated with the thought of Him. This is of extreme importance in estimating the religious value of the work.

ii. God is expressly deemed *the Creator* in vii. 13; xii. 1.

iii. He is regarded as still working in the world and exercising over it *His providential care*. There is indeed a time for everything (iii. 1—8), but there is no hint that the author supposed such times to be outside God's jurisdiction, as the Greeks thought Fate was above the empire of Zeus. It is implied in iii. 11, viii. 17 that the work which God has done is more than that which came into being at the Creation; and in iii. 14 it is said that "all that God doeth (or, 'shall do') shall be for ever." It is even added that that which has been driven away (or, as we should say, "has passed away") will be restored by Him (iii. 15). Qoheleth regards "the righteous, and the wise, and their works" as "in the hand of God" (ix. 1).

iv. God is spoken of as *the Giver* of various things to man; "the spirit" to each man (xii. 7); the days of his life (v. 18 (17); viii. 15; ix. 9); wealth, possessions, splendour (v. 19 (18); vi. 2), and in some cases "power to eat of it" (vi. 2); in fact the enjoyment of life and of toil (ii. 24, 26; iii. 13; v. 19 (18)), with, as it seems, v. 20 (19 *c*); and even ability to eat and to feel (ii. 25). Yet He has also given the "ill business" of the desire to search out everything (i. 13; iii. 10; cf. iii. 11). Finally, according to the most probable interpretation of a very difficult passage, "the words of the wise" spring ultimately from Him (**xii. 11**).

v. *God is supreme* and His work is perfect, and beyond our comprehension. It "shall be for ever, to it one cannot add, and from it one cannot take away" (iii. 14). He "is in the

heavens, and thou upon the earth, therefore let thy words be few" (v. 2 (1)). One cannot contend with Him (vi. 10), or straighten what He has made crooked (vii. 13), or find fault with Him (vii. 14). His work in its fulness is beyond the wise man to find out (viii. 17). Hence a man cannot tell whether God's actions towards him are due to God's love or His hatred (ix. 1).

vi. Here perhaps may be added, Qoheleth is an observer of *Nature*,—of the solidity of the earth, the rising and the setting sun, together with the presumed haste of the sun to return to the East, the gyration of the wind, the torrents going seawards, though the sea becomes no fuller, together with the presumed return of the torrents to their starting-point (i. 5—7); of the gathering clouds and the outpour of their rain, the fallen tree, the uncertainty of the weather, even though wind or cloud seems to predict it (xi. 3—6), of a short-lived spell of fine weather in winter (xii. 2), the white-flowered almond (the first sign of change), and the half-frozen locust (xii. 5). He also mentions a very large number of things which he has often seen, though they are not independent of human work (ii. 4—11; iii. 1—8; xii. 3—6).

But though he sees all this variety the author is more impressed still by the sameness of everything, both in Nature proper and in human actions (i. 4—10).

vii. *God the Moral Governor of the world*. This fact is assumed by Qoheleth, but, notwithstanding, he feels it to be a great difficulty as he looks out upon life. It is indeed the centre round which his thoughts continually revolve, and to which he turns again and again. Nor is it easy to say that he comes to any definite conclusion, save that God is, and must be, such a Governor. Qoheleth has, as it seems, collected the thoughts of different persons on the subject, and, as with his Book as a whole, so with this subject, he has not been able to draw up his thoughts in order and to arrive at a clear decision. It is in this that his friend, who was the editor of his book after his death, chiefly comes to his assistance, by adding sayings, perhaps in the middle of the book, certainly at its close.

As the book stands, its references to God as the Moral

Governor refer to His action (*a*) during this life, (*b*) after this life.

(*a*) *During this life.* We are told baldly, and without any qualification, that God gives to him who pleases Him wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner the task of laying up wealth which eventually will belong to the godly man (ii. 26). Again, God can bring it about that the commission of one sin ruins previous work (v. 6 (5)), or that He fully responds to a man's legitimate desires (v. 20 (19)). On the other hand, wickedness and transgression may be seen on the seat of judgement and of righteousness (iii. 16); oppression may be so severe that it is better to be dead than alive, and better still not to have been born (iv. 1—3); and (at the best) success brings envy (iv. 4); a righteous man may die early, and a wicked man live on (vii. 15); the wicked may be buried honourably, and the good be exiled (viii. 10); in fact, the righteous may be treated like the wicked, and *vice versâ* (viii. 14).

What answers are given? One is that God permits this as a test to men, to show them that they are no better than animals (iii. 18). Another is that God will certainly judge both the righteous and the wicked, and their work, at the proper time (**iii. 17**). For though delay in the execution of judgement leads to much greater wrong-doing the result is certain. It shall be well with the godly, and ill with the ungodly (**viii. 11—13**).

(*b*) *After this life.* It is indeed possible that the judgement referred to in the preceding words may be that of the hereafter, but this is not certain. The author may have had in mind only the halting step of justice on earth, which comes at last, however slow it may be. But in two passages of the work in its present form there can be hardly any doubt that the judgement is regarded as taking place after death, for they are both connected with the description of old age and the ensuing dissolution. The first (**xi. 9** *b*—**xii. 1** *a*) is drawing a contrast between the light-hearted apparent irresponsibility of youth, and God's judgement, after which the writer passes at once to describe old age and death. And the second (**xii. 14**) comes at the very end of the book, after that de-

scription. These are certainly the additions of the friend and editor, and show that he at least believed without any doubt in "a judgement to come."

viii. *God and His worship.* Although Qoheleth is not much concerned with the externals of religion he shows that he is aware of them, and we find that they are such as are described fully in other books of the Old Testament. He was indeed no Pharisee, but yet he was certainly a God-fearing and observant Jew.

(*a*) He speaks of *the house of God*, where, as it seems, oral instruction was given, or, at least, the Scripture was read publicly, and sacrifices were offered (v. 1 (iv. 17)); also of *the holy place* (viii. 10). Both these verses are most naturally understood of the Temple.

(*b*) He mentions *the angel* (v. 6 (5)), presumably either as recording the sin, or as deciding the punishment for it (see the note).

(*c*) He seems to speak of *prayer* in general (v. 2, 3 (1, 2)), and perhaps also of a recognised leader in ceremonial and formal prayers (ix. 17).

(*d*) He refers twice to *sacrifices* (v. 1 (iv. 17); ix. 2).

(*e*) He speaks of persons being ceremonially *clean or unclean* (ix. 2).

(*f*) He mentions *oaths*, as enforcing one's duty (viii. 2), and as being taken either lightly or solemnly (ix. 2).

(*g*) Lastly, he knew of the custom of taking *vows* and of the danger of haste in taking them, and of regret for having done so, and he quotes Deut. xxiii. 21 with reference to this (v. 4—6 (3—5)).

2. The Doctrine of Man.

i. That each man receives much from God has been stated already in 1. iv. (p. xxxvii). Further, *God made man upright* (vii. 29), and he was intended to be in fear of God (iii. 14), for such fear, together with keeping God's commandments, is the privilege and duty, not impossible to be fulfilled, of every man (v. 7 (6); **xii. 13**). For this, man must "remember" Him (**xii. 1**). Man is however to exercise common sense,

and not grow mad by over-asceticism and rigour in supposed religious duties (vii. 16).

ii. *Yet man is sinful.* Man has found out many contrivances (vii. 29), and in fact, "there is none righteous in the land, who doeth good and sinneth not" (vii. 20, where the author seems to have had 1 K. viii. 46 in mind), so that each must remember his own wrongdoing when he complains of others (vii. 22). But women are even worse than men (vii. 26, 28). He knows of persons whose heart "is fully set in them to do evil" (viii. 11), and he says that "fools" may be so far gone in folly that "they know not when they do evil" (v. 1 (iv. 17)). He fears the effect of even one sin on even much good (ix. 18, cf. v. 6 (5)), though he is aware of the distinction between "unintentional" sins and others (v. 6 (5)). It is implied also that some sins may be "hidden" (**xii. 14**).

iii. *A man remains unsatisfied.*

(*a*) His aims and desires are too great (i. 13, 18; ii. 1—3, 11; iii. 11; vii. 23, 24; viii. 6, 7, 17).

(*b*) So that he is oppressed with the fleeting character, the emptiness, of everything (i. 2, 14; ii. 1, 11, 15, 17, 19, 20, 23, 26; iv. 4, 7, 8, 16; v. 10 (9); vi. 9; viii. 10, 14; ix. 1· xi. 8; xii. 8).

(*c*) Whether this be the external world (i. 8; vi. 7), or wealth and what wealth brings (ii. 4—11, 12; v. 10 (9), 12 (11), 14 (13)—17 (16); vi. 2, 3; vii. 11, 12; x. 19), or his own toil (i. 3; ii. 20—23; iv. 8). Even writing books and study bring their own troubles (**xii. 12**).

iv. Yet in spite of being unsatisfied, each man is bid find *pleasure and happiness* in and through his daily work, such physical and mental enjoyment being expressly allotted him by God (ii. 10, 24; iii. 12, 13, 22; v. 18 (17)—20 (19); vii. 14; viii. 15; ix. 7—9; xi. 7—10).

v. *The duty of man to man.* His reputation among others is more precious than ointment (vii. 1); as a God-fearing man he is to mix freely with good and bad (vii. 18); in commerce he should make bold ventures (xi. 1); although he should be prudent and not put all into one venture, but rather divide them into several (xi. 2). Laziness is ruinous (x. 18). Again, partnership in work is invaluable (iv. 9—12).

vi. The author's consideration of *Social Questions* is of special interest, for it is consonant only with Jewish religion and ethics. No heathen, and probably not even a proselyte, could have written as he has. As the compilers of the Historical Books, as the Prophets, as the authors of the Pentateuch, were each alike shocked by instances of injustice and oppression, and were glad to point out how hateful these were to true religion, so was it with Qoheleth. He had a very tender heart for suffering humanity, and knew that injustice and oppression of every kind were contrary to the will of God, even though he could not always understand the practical action, or inaction, of God towards them.

(*a*) With reference to *the Government*, he speaks in general terms of "the ruler," with whom patience must be shown, though he makes mistakes, particularly in his patronage (x. 4—7); and, more precisely, of the king, whom the conscientious man will obey, remembering his oath of fealty taken before God, and with regard to whom Qoheleth gives practical advice (viii. 1—4). Above all, Qoheleth says, speak no evil of him—or indeed of a rich man—even in private (x. 20). Qoheleth has also an obscure passage about an old and foolish king with his two successors (iv. 13—16). He is also aware of the injury which may be wrought by a young king with sensual princes, and of the good accomplished by one who acts like a gentleman, with princes keen on duty (x. 16, 17). He also speaks of the long line of despotic officials culminating in the king, who even puts in a claim for taxes when fresh land is brought under cultivation (v. 8 *sq.* (7 *sq.*)). Perhaps he once refers to the "ten rulers" of a Hellenistic town (vii. 19), but this may be a gloss.

(*b*) In the case of *the rich and the poor* he points out that the latter sleep the better (v. 12 (11)), and that by the whim of the ruler their positions may be reversed (x. 6, 7). He gives a glowing and characteristically oriental description of the pleasures of a rich man (ii. 1—9).

(*c*) He has seen *injustice* powerful in legal transactions (iii. 16), and oppression and bribery perverting even a wise judge (vii. 7), and he grieves bitterly for the many who live under continual oppression (iv. 1—3), though some of it is

inseparable from the oriental system of government (v. 8 *sq.* (7 *sq.*)). On the other hand, a man may have delivered his city by his wisdom, but if he is poor he will get no compensation (ix. 13—16). Popularity, even in the case of a king, is very short (iv. 15, 16), and a man's success engenders envy (iv. 4).

vii. So much is said in Ecclesiastes about *Wisdom and Folly* that it is worth while collecting the passages where the words occur:

(*a*) Wisdom and Folly contrasted. i. 17, ii. 3, 12, 13 *sq.*, 15 *sq. bis*, 19; iv. 13; vii. 4, 5, 6, 16 *sq.*; ix. 17 and x. 2, 12 *sq.*

(*b*) Wisdom alone. i. 13, 16; ii. 26; vii. 7, 11, 12, 19, 23; viii. 1, 16, 17; ix. 1, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18; x. 10; **xii. 9, 11.**

(*c*) Folly alone. v. 1 (iv. 17); v. 4 (3); x. 12—15.

viii. *Death and beyond.* New light has recently been thrown upon the belief of the Jews in life beyond the life on earth[1], and it is becoming understood that the faith of the people as a whole was not only more vivid, but actually nearer the truth, than that of many of the leaders of thought whose works have come down to us. For the latter, in their desire to uproot occasions of error among the populace, unwittingly sacrificed much of what ought to have been retained.

There is no doubt that the Egyptians (whose influence on the Israelites during four hundred years is beginning to be appreciated) firmly believed in the active and energetic life of the so-called dead. The dead, according to the Egyptians, enjoyed a personal and conscious existence, partook of food, and even took interest in things on earth. The greater number of the Israelites held the same belief. But as such "other worldliness" might easily lead, and often did lead, to over active interest in things concerning the dead, to prayer to them for their assistance, and even to disregard of God's active participation in the affairs of earth, and His claim to implicit obedience to His commands here, the more pious of Israel's sons were anxious to diminish the temptations to forget Him. Hence they preferred to think of the dead in an almost negative fashion. The dead, it was taught, have

[1] Oesterley, *Immortality and the Unseen World, a Study in Old Testament Religion*, 1921.

completely passed away from earth, and have no direct or indirect connexion with it. Why therefore pray to them? They know not anything of what goes on here. And, in any case, they are powerless, for though indeed they do just exist, yet they are themselves in a shadowy and barely conscious state.

Yet gradually it dawned upon the Jewish leaders of thought that something more must be said. Ezekiel's vision of the bones raised to life again (ch. xxxvii.) had behind it the dim hope of a personal resurrection, and the promise in Isa. xxvi. 19, "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise," cannot have been only a picturesque description of the restoration of Palestine as the new centre of a restored Judaism. In due time the promise could be made (Dan. xii. 2 *sq.*) that each person should live again, and receive in himself the judgement due, rising to everlasting life, or to shame and everlasting contempt.

The many references in our book to death and beyond death may be tentatively arranged as follows:

(*a*) Death is certain and universal, for man and beast, for wise and foolish, etc., though no one knows when it is coming (ii. 14; iii. 19; vii. 2; ix. 2, 11 *sq.*), so that no one can resist it or give a substitute (viii. 8). See also xii. 6 *sq.*

(*b*) Professional mourners who have heard of an approaching death wait about in order to be hired (xii. 5). Funerals are sometimes carried out with solemn pomp (viii. 10), and not to receive burial is a terrible calamity (vi. 3). There is probably an allusion to the week of mourning in vii. 2.

(*c*) The thought of the impossibility of taking away what one has earned is depressing (v. 15 (14)), especially the thought that one's gain may go to a fool, or at least to one who has not worked for it (ii. 18–21), for if a man stands alone without son or brother he can only say, "then for whom am I toiling, and depriving myself of good" (iv. 8)? And there is the further fact that the dead are forgotten (i. 11; ii. 16; viii. 10; ix. 5).

(*d*) Another series of passages is more difficult, and many of them have been seriously misunderstood. It is true that

in one passage (iii. 21) Qoheleth seems to be doubtful whether there is really any distinction between the fate of a man and that of a beast[1]—his words imply that he has always been told there is—but elsewhere he assumes the continuance of personal existence after death. But—and this is important—he considers this not *per se* or in connexion with God (save in connexion with His judgement in **xi. 9***b*; **xii. 14**), but solely in relation to life on earth.

The days of darkness beyond death are many (xi. 8); all men are going to one place (vi. 6, apparently *She'ôl*), to the dead (ix. 3); and they are better off than the living because they are no longer oppressed (iv. 2); yet, as regards this life on earth, a live dog is better than a dead lion, for the dead know nothing of what is going on here, nor do they share in rewards here, nor have they any more love, hatred, or envy (ix. 4—6), nor, in fact, have they any work, reckoning, knowledge or wisdom (ix. 10). There is no bringing them back to enjoy what is going on here on earth (iii. 22). Neither, it may be added, can any one learn while he is on earth what shall happen upon it after he is gone (vi. 12; x. 14).

If this interpretation of the passages mentioned above represents their true meaning, when considered in their context (as the present writer believes) it is evident that Qoheleth says very little about the future life as we regard it. He does express himself doubtfully once (iii. 21), but only once, and plainly he is not much concerned with it. The puzzle to him is, What is life on earth, for he nowhere regards it as a place of preparation for hereafter. For the rest (with the one exception perhaps interpolated) he accepts the doctrine of continued personal existence after death, and, if his friend and editor really represents his general sentiments, the doctrine of an universal judgement which is to take place in the future. Of the present state of the dead he tells us nothing more whatever.

[1] The question is so unique in Eccles., indeed so contrary to his thought, and so unnecessary to its context, that it may be suspected of being an interpolation by a materialistic reader.

VIII. WAS THE AUTHOR A SADDUCEE?

The answer depends entirely on what is meant by "a Sadducee." Unfortunately not only is the origin of the title obscure, but also the opinions of the party are uncertain.

It is evident that the Sadduceeism described in the New Testament is not that of our book. Imagine a Caiaphas, or any other of "the accursed brood of Annas" writing a book of the moral earnestness and the sympathetic ardour of Ecclesiastes, with its intense feeling of the unsatisfying character of this life! Besides, Sadducees, as we know them, took a deep interest in the Temple and the sacrificial cult, but our author is much more concerned with the importance of heart-worship (v. 1, 2 (iv. 17, v. 1)). So also he speaks of "the angel" (v. 6 (5)), and, if the *primâ facie* interpretation of Acts xxiii. 8 be adopted, the Sadducees did not believe in such beings[1].

Again, the Sadducees insisted upon the doctrine of man's freewill, in contrast to the Pharisaic tenet of Divine predestination[2]. But Qoheleth ignores the former, and implies rather the latter (iii. 1—8, 14; vii. 13 *sq.*; ix. 1; xi. 5).

Again, the Sadducees had a Book of Decrees, apparently of case-law, which was so harsh in its interpretation of Biblical passages that the day of its abrogation was marked as a festival[3]. That is very far from the temper of Qoheleth.

Ecclesiastes therefore cannot have been written by one of

[1] Yet the meaning of Acts xxiii. 8 is not certain, for the Sadducees accepted the Pentateuch, and therefore can hardly have totally rejected belief in angels. The reference may be only to the elaborate angelology of the time. See Box, *E.R.E.* xi. 45.

[2] "The Pharisees say that some actions, but not all, are the work of fate, and some of them are in our own power, to happen or not.... The Sadducees take away fate and say there is no such thing, and that the events of human affairs are not at its disposal, but they suppose that all our actions are in our own power, so that we are ourselves the causes of what is good, and receive what is evil from our own folly" (Josephus, *Antt.* xiii. v. 9, §§ 172 *sq.*).

[3] Box, *ibid.*

the Sadducees as we know them in history. Whether it was the work of a man who held opinions, some of which were eventually held by them, is another matter. He certainly wrote before Sadducees as such existed, and possibly his book may have contributed to produce a habit of mind which showed itself in some aspects of later Sadduceeism.

The chief alleged point of agreement is the denial of personal continuance after death, which Josephus attributes to the Sadducees[1]. But his testimony as an opponent is not wholly without suspicion. For perhaps they only affirmed that such continuance could not be proved from the Pentateuch (cf. Matt. xxii. 31 *sq.*). Our author, after we have made full allowance for the fact that some of his utterances have been misunderstood[2], certainly has very little to say about the hereafter, and only in one passage has any doubt about it.

It must be granted that he was no Pharisee, but unless every non-Pharisee is to be considered Sadducean it is equally illogical to call him a Sadducee, in the ordinary meaning of that term.

Ludwig Levy[3] however argues at length that he was so much a Sadducee as to have been one or other of the two founders of the party, Zadoq or Boethos. Very little is known of them, and the evidence of their existence is confined to a Midrashic writing of the fifth or the sixth century A.D.[4], where they are said to have been two disciples of Antigonus of Socho. This would fix their date as slightly before 200 B.C. But although the date would be suitable, the evidence is much too late for the identification to be taken seriously[5].

[1] *Antt.* XVIII. i. 4, § 16. [2] *Vide supra*, pp. xliv *sq.*

[3] pp. 39—45. [4] *Aboth d'R. Nathan*, A § 5, B § 10.

[5] It is perhaps sufficient to mention the fact that Levy also thinks that Qoheleth calls himself a "king" in the Stoic sense of "Only the wise is king," and that the word "Qoheleth" means one who collects his people as a shepherd his sheep (in fact, a Hebrew "Poimandres"), the word thus suggesting that the author was the head of a school. He is further of opinion that Qoheleth wrote chs. i.—vii. at Jerusalem, but that his opinions caused so much opposition that he had to flee to Egypt. This rests on a fanciful interpretation of i. 12 and viii. 10. See Levy, pp. 32—39.

IX. THE AUTHOR. A SUMMARY OF RESULTS

We know very little of the author. He lived at Jerusalem, and he was, as his friend and editor informs us, one of the "Wise," i.e., presumably, one of those who devoted themselves to study and were accounted scholars. He therefore took pains, both in selecting proverbial sayings, and in giving them such a form as would be agreeable to his readers, and, further, he was thoroughly conscientious in his presentation of truth (**xii. 9, 10**). His friend has also added a statement of the value of such sayings in general, viz. that they urge onward, are trustworthy, contain solid food, and are ultimately due to the great Shepherd of the sheep (**xii. 11**).

We are also told in the Title that Qoheleth was a descendant of David (i. 1), a statement which seems to be derived from the author's words, "I Qoheleth was king over Israel in Jerusalem" (i. 12), but that he therein intended to state an actual fact about himself is improbable, for the book does not leave on its readers the impression that it was the work of a king. The phrases in i. 12, 16 no doubt only indicate the author's desire to portray vividly the possibilities of a certain kind of life. Nor indeed is it necessary to suppose that he was even a wealthy man himself. His description of the life and feelings of a rich man may be only a literary device.

He seems also to have reached at least middle, perhaps even old, age before he died. He composed his book about the year 225 B.C., when he was still living in Jerusalem or the neighbourhood.

His book is marked by so singular a lack of order and of progress that every attempt to mark divisions of its contents showing advance in its argument has satisfied none but the ingenious discoverer. This lack of order, it will be noticed, is as true of the writing left by Qoheleth as of its posthumous present form. In each case it is not the product of a mind which set itself to argue a matter logically. Contrast the sustained argument of the Book of Job, whatever the final truth about the history of the composition of that book may be. For both originally and in its canonical form the

Book of Job represents an orderly composition. If then Qoheleth shows no signs of having marshalled his thoughts in order, and, after due reasoning, drawn up his conclusions clearly—as we today expect an author to do who deals with philosophical and ethical questions,—what was his mode of procedure? As a member of the confraternity of the Wise he was skilful in framing and editing proverbs, and for that reason may have given much time to collecting them and other sayings which referred to the one subject of his thoughts (for nothing can be further from the right conception of Ecclesiastes than to suppose it to be merely a casual and ordinary Common-place Book), the relation of man to the world and to God. Some of these sayings were already in a suitable form, and he had only to write them down. But others he had to rewrite, putting them into such language as would most appeal to his contemporaries, and these became almost or quite indistinguishable from his own meditations (e.g. i. 18). He appears to have recorded all this quite unsystematically, no doubt with the intention of rearranging it later. But he died without carrying out his intention, and his friend did not feel justified in trying to arrange them for him.

Qoheleth himself was chiefly interested in the value of life on earth, and man's immediate duties here both to himself and to others, in a word, to

> assert eternal Providence
> And justify the ways of God to men.

He could, as occasion served, quote from Deuteronomy (Eccles. v. 4 (3)), Kings (Eccles. vii. 20), and even from some form of a famous Babylonian Epic (see vi. 3; ix. 7, notes), but it was the great moral questions which appealed to him. So he collected all the authors on such subjects that he could find, and he set their thoughts down as best he could. His friend and editor issued his work with conscientious fidelity, making a few additions, some to bring out (as he believed) the essentially orthodox faith of the author.

X. TEXT AND VERSIONS

1. Hebrew.

Very little has been done in the critical study of the various forms of the Masoretic text of Ecclesiastes, but it is not probable that such study will throw much light on the consonantal as distinguished from the vocalised form of it. For the present work reliance has been placed upon Ginsburg's edition of the Hebrew Bible, 1894, with continual reference to Kittel's, 1913, with its notes, made in Ecclesiastes by Driver. Euringer, *Das Masorahtext des Koheleth kritisch untersucht*, 1890, gives a convenient conspectus of the various readings of MSS. and versions, and even, to some extent, of the Talmudic literature, but though his work is painstaking it is not very suggestive.

2. Aramaic[1].

i. *Syriac.*

(*a*) *The Peshitta*. The text used is that of Lee, 1823, but the present writer has had the great advantage of the use of a collation of this in Ecclesiastes with the Urmi edition, 1852 (a Nestorian text) and of several MSS., made by Dr W. Emery Barnes. The result of this is to show that there are very few variations of importance.

The time and place of translation are alike unknown. It is conjectured that it was made at Edessa, the centre of Syriac literary culture, and it seems to have been the work of Jews rather than Christians[2]. In character it is extraordinarily dull, for it is a very literal translation of what we know as the Masoretic text, and very seldom throws any light upon the text itself or its meaning[3].

[1] Dr Burkitt has recently (*Journal of Theol. Studies*, Oct. 1921, pp. 22–28) thrown out the suggestion that our Hebrew text is a poor translation of an Aramaic original. The only strong example he adduces is vii. 14 (see note). But he proposes several plausible emendations.

[2] Burkitt, *Encl. Bib.* IV. col. 5025.

[3] Podechard (p. 210) gives a list of its variations from the Hebrew, where it agrees with the LXX.

(*b*) *The Harclean* or *Syro-Hexaplar Syriac.* It was made in 616, 617 A.D. by Paul, Bishop of Tella, and is a very literal translation of Origen's text of the LXX. Its chief value lies in giving readings of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodótion.

ii. *The Targum.* This is said to have been made as late as the tenth or the eleventh century of our era, and is therefore almost worthless for critical purposes. A translation of the common text is given in Ginsburg's edition of our book. Lagarde's critical edition of the common text in his *Hagiographa Chaldaice,* 1873, has been taken as the standard, but continual use has been made of the Yemen text, published by A. Levy, *Das Targum zu Koheleth nach südarabischen Handschriften,* 1905. This version makes no pretension to being a literal rendering, but is entirely homiletic, seeing continually the relation of man to eternal realities, and considering how this or that action affects his state hereafter.

3. Greek.

i. *The Septuagint.* The date of this version is quite unknown, although the Pentateuch was probably translated as early as the first half of the third century B.C. Philo throws no light on the date, *vide supra,* p. xiii. On the other hand, the version now included in the LXX was accepted as part of the LXX without any hesitation by Origen (c. 230 A.D.) and Jerome (388 A.D.), both of whom expressly contrasted it with the versions of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion.

With the two latter we are not concerned for the moment. But the LXX of our book recalls Aquila's methods so vividly that there must be some connexion between it and him. Those methods rested fundamentally on the belief that every letter of Scripture was inspired, and that therefore no particle was too small or unimportant to have a distinct intellectual and spiritual meaning of its own. The crucial example is the Hebrew word *'eth,* which is a mere sign marking the object, without possessing (in literary usage) any meaning in itself. But it so happens that there is another *'eth,* a preposition meaning "with," and some Rabbis, notably

R. Aqiba (died c. 132 A.D.), taught that the former *'eth* also possessed an inclusive force, suggesting something additional to what was expressly mentioned. So when we read in Gen. iv. 1 that Eve bore *'eth* Cain, the *'eth* there implies, according to Aqiba, that a twin, a sister, was born with Cain. Hence wherever *'eth* appears Aquila's method is to "translate" it by σύν ("with"), without making this govern a case.

This is what the LXX version of our book also does, though not uniformly. The figures, according to Podechard (p. 204), are, of the 72 occurrences of *'eth* in the Hebrew, 32 are represented by σύν. Of the remaining 40, the Greek article (as sometimes in Aquila) represents *'eth* in 31 cases, which leaves only 9 unaccounted for. This and other similarities[1] suggest at first sight that the LXX version should really be called Aquila's, but against this is the fact that it differs so very often from the fragments of Aquila's version which have come down to us. Now Jerome speaks twenty-seven times (all referring to Jer., Ezek., Dan.) of Aquila having issued two editions of his version, the second being the more literal[2]. It has therefore been thought that the "LXX" translation of our book represents one of these. It may be so, though there is no certainty that Aquila made more than one edition in the case of our book. It is safer therefore to attribute it to an earlier attempt by a member of the same Rabbinic school of thought.

The MSS. which best represent the LXX of Ecclesiastes before the confusion caused by Origen's *Hexapla* are probably B (the Vatican, fourth cent.), and especially 68 of Holmes and Parsons (fifteenth cent.)[3].

On the whole the LXX represents the same text as the Masoretic, and where it differs is seldom better.

ii. *Aquila*. It is hardly necessary to say more about this version. No consecutive portions of our book have been

[1] See McNeile, pp. 117—121, and especially p. 132, "The Greek text is saturated with the style of Aquila."

[2] "*Aquilae vero secunda Editio quam Hebraei* κατὰ ἀκρίβειαν *nominant*," etc. on Ezek. iii. 15 (Vallarsi, v. col. 32).

[3] See McNeile, p. 136.

discovered, and the material extant is still covered by Field's *Hexapla* (1875). Aquila himself was a native of Pontus, a proselyte to Judaism, and a disciple of Aqiba. For an example of Aquila's version enabling us to restore the text of the LXX see viii. 1, note.

iii. *Symmachus*. He is said to have been a Samaritan, and an Ebionite Christian, and to have published his version some fifty years later than Aquila, about 200 A.D. It aims at rendering the true meaning in an attractive Greek style, and is often very suggestive. He is much more interesting in Ecclesiastes than either Aquila or Theodotion.

iv. *Theodotion*. He seems to have been an Ephesian who was a proselyte to Judaism, and to have published his work in the reign of Commodus (180—192 A.D.). The whole version is a revision of the LXX by the Hebrew. He used a good text of the LXX which is unrepresented in our existing MSS. and this constitutes for us the chief value of his version[1]. For, unlike Symmachus, he is not of much help in understanding the Hebrew.

4. LATIN.

i. *Old Latin*. This was made from the LXX in, presumably, the second century A.D. It nowhere exists in a complete and uncorrupt form. Cyprian's quotations are said to be the standard[2], and of these Hartel's Index gives five references to Ecclesiastes in the genuine works of Cyprian, one in the *spuria*, and one which really belongs to Ecclesiasticus. The five in the genuine writings are all in the *Testimonia*, and of them i. 14 is only verbally different from the Vulgate; v. 3, 9 (2, 8) are closer to the Hebrew and the LXX than the Vulgate is; vii. 17 is not very close either to the Hebrew or the LXX and is further off than the Vulgate; and x. 9 adds to the Hebrew and the LXX an explanation which is not in the Vulgate.

ii. The version which *Jerome* made for his Commentary in 388 A.D. He tells us in his preface (III. col. 381) that he

[1] See Burkitt, *Enc. Bib.* IV. col. 5018.
[2] Burkitt, *Enc. Bib.* IV. col. 5022.

translated from the Hebrew, following the LXX when it did not differ too much.

iii. The *Vulgate* was Jerome's second translation, made in 394 A.D. It was very hastily done, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of songs taking him only three days. See his Preface to "the three books of Solomon"[1]. It was evidently made from the Hebrew. The edition used has been that of Tischendorf 1873 in which the variants of the Cod. Amiatinus are recorded.

5. The SAHIDIC version appears to be of value only for the textual criticism of the LXX.

XI. SOME COMMENTARIES OF WHICH USE HAS BEEN MADE IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS EDITION

Those of special value are marked with an asterisk.

JEROME (at Bethlehem, 388 A.D.), ed. Vallarsi, 1767, III. coll. 381—498. (Jer.)

GINSBURG, C. D. (1861). Valuable for its summary of the historical treatment of Ecclesiastes, its frequent references to Jewish commentators, and its translation of the Targum.

TYLER, T. (1874).

*DELITZSCH, FRANZ (1875). English translation, 1877. (Del.)

WRIGHT, C. H. H. (1883). Donnellan Lectures for 1880—1.

PLUMPTRE, E. H. (1881). *Cambridge Bible for Schools.* (Plu.)

GIETMANN, GERARD (Soc. Jes.), Paris, 1890.

WILDEBOER, G. Freiburg i. B., 1898 (Marti's *Kurzer Hand-commentar*). (Wild.)

SIEGFRIED, C. Göttingen, 1898 (Nowack's *Handkommentar*), can never be neglected.

*MCNEILE, A. H. (1904). Not a full commentary but a careful study of sources, with much original work. (McN.)

ZAPLETAL, V. Freiburg (Switzerland), 1905. (Zap.)

BARTON, G. A. (1908). (*International Critical Commentary.*)

LEVY, LUDWIG. Leipzig, 1912. Marked by more originality than sound judgement.

*PODECHARD, E. Paris, 1912. Fullest and best. (Pod.)

JASTROW, MORRIS, Jr. *A Gentle Cynic.* Philadelphia, 1919.

[1] IX. 1293.

Among other books may be mentioned

CHEYNE, T. K. *Job and Solomon, or The Wisdom of the Old Testament*, 1887.

EURINGER, G. *Das Masorahtext des Koheleth kritisch untersucht*, 1890.

Besides the Abbreviations given after some of the names above the following may be mentioned:

Dr. = Driver.

G.-K. = *Gesenius-Kautzsch, Hebrew Grammar*. English translation by A. E. Cowley, 2nd ed. 1910.

H.D.B. = Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

E.R.E. = *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*.

Schürer = *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*. 4th ed. 1908—1911. English translation (from 1st ed.), 1890.

† in the Notes indicates that all the places in the Hebrew Bible where a word occurs have been enumerated.

'Our face is set like flint against our trouble,
Yet many things there are which comfort us,
This bubble is a rainbow-coloured bubble,
This bubble-life tumultuous."

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI
(*Called to be saints*, p. 519).

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ECCLESIASTES

OR

THE PREACHER

THE words of [1]the Preacher, the son of David, king 1
in Jerusalem.

[1] Or, *the great orator* Heb. *Koheleth.*

Ch. I. 1. The Title of the Book.

1. *The words of*] A common form for the beginning of a writing, both in earlier (Amos i. 1) and later times (Jer. i. 1; Neh. i. 1; Prov. xxx. 1, xxxi. 1). It connotes not only certain words and phrases ascribed to the speaker or writer, but also his opinions. Compare the common phrase in the Mishna, "the words of Rabbi" so and so, meaning, "This is the opinion of R." In Neh. i. 1 it connotes rather the narrative of Nehemiah. The title of Chron. (lit. "the words of the days") is more technical, meaning the Annals of each day. The Heb., as always in such a case, has no definite article, and the translation "Words of" is therefore just permissible, but when the next word is in itself a name or title (as here) it nearly always defines also that which precedes it. Thus the translation "The words of" is almost certainly correct.

the Preacher] "or, *the great orator*, Heb. *Koheleth*," R.V. marg. The word occurs also in *vv.* 2, 12, vii. 27 (perhaps with the article, see note), xii. 8 (with article), 9, 10 †. Aq. only transliterates, *κωλέθ*, but LXX translates by *ἐκκλησιαστής* (*Ecclesiastes*, Vulg.), for which Lidd. and Scott (1897) give, "*a member of the ἐκκλησία, ecclesiast*, Plat., *Gorg.* 452 E, *Apol.* 25 A, etc." This interpretation is of some value as representing the opinion of Jews in Egypt within a century or so after the composition of the Heb., but it has had too great an influence upon commentators, ancient and modern.

In deciding the meaning of the Heb. word two points must be considered, the root and the precise form of it.

(1) As to the root it is very unfortunate that the verb is never found elsewhere in the simple (Qal) form, but only in the reflexive

or passive (Niphal) and the causative (Hiphil). It may always be translated by "assemble," and refers always to persons, or an assembly of persons (so even in Job xi. 10, where the causative is used absolutely), not to things. In any case it contains in itself no suggestion of preaching or speaking (as Jer. *concionator*; A.V., R.V. the Preacher; R.V. margin, "the great orator"; Plu. "the Debater"). The participle of the Qal is found in our word *Qoheleth* only, and this, it may be noticed, is of the transitive, not the stative form, and thus can hardly mean a member of an assembly, but one who assembles. The substantive *qāhāl* ("assembly") is common throughout the O.T., and *qᵉhillah* (also "assembly") occurs twice. As regards the root therefore we must translate *Qoheleth* as "one that assembles."

(2) The precise form is the active participle in the feminine singular, which is often used to express abstract conceptions (G.-K. § 122, p—v). Hence it may be (i) a title, or designation of office, cf. "Excellency," "Highness"; or better (ii), as in Arabic, giving the idea of intensiveness to a *Qôhĕl* (cf. W. Wright, *Arabic Grammar*, § 233, rem. c.). In this case the word means the *Qôhĕl par excellence*[1].

But now there is a difficulty. What is the force of "the Assembler" *par excellence*? It can hardly refer to Solomon's "assembling" the people for the Dedication of the Temple (1 K. viii. 1 *sq.*), for this does not seem to bear upon the subject of our book. Again, to regard Solomon as the great Moderator of the General Assembly of Israel on other occasions does not fit in with the little that we know of him and his times.

It is therefore tempting to attribute a wider meaning to the root in the Qal than that presented in the two surviving forms, Niphal and Hiphil, and to believe it was used here, not indeed directly of inanimate things, but of persons *represented by their opinions*. Just as we speak of "collecting authors," modifying the usual sense of the substantive, so a Jew may have retained the verb and personified the thoughts.

This suits the present case admirably. For not only is the book apparently a collection of sayings on various topics, but the author of xii. 9 speaks of Qoheleth as having "pondered, and sought out, and set in order many proverbs." On the whole then we would give to Qoheleth the connotation of "the great Collector" of men's thoughts and sayings. Cf. Grotius (in Poole's *Synopsis*), who, however, says that the author has collected the opinions about the blessedness of those who were deemed wise, and also Mendelssohn; so also Caietan earlier, "crediderim ego, quod a congregando vana et rationes vanitatis Salomon nominat seipsum *Coheleth*, nam apud Hebraeos a congregando Coheleth dicitur" (*Comm. in S. Script.* t. III, Lugduni, 1639, p. 599).

[1] It is therefore unnecessary to postulate the article in the "pre-Akiban" text of "Qoheleth" in our verse in order to explain its presence in the LXX, as McN. does (p. 138).

Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher; vanity of 2

the son of David] similarly identified with Qoh. in *v.* 12, and, from the description of his activity, ii. 1—9, evidently Solomon, although the name of Solomon is never used in Eccles.

king in Jerusalem] The reference is to Qoh. not to David. *King*, and therefore able to give full play to his desire for experiment in the moral life, and to see the effect of his theories when put into practice.

in Jerusalem] both the city of God, where religion was at its best, and the centre of the organisation of a great kingdom.

Solomon was the ideal ruler for his wealth and for his wisdom, and therefore was chosen by the author as his spokesman.

2. Theme of the Book.

2. *Vanity of vanities*] In this verse twice and in xii. 8. So the Vulg., *vanitas vanitatum*[1] from the LXX. Outside the Pent. (Deut. xxxii. 21 †) and the Hist. Books (1 K. xvi. 13, 26; 2 K. xvii. 15 †) the word translated *vanity* (*hebel*) occurs repeatedly. Its proper meaning, seen very clearly in the Targum of Ps. xc. 9 ("like the breath of the mouth in winter"), is a "breath" (Isa. lvii. 13), or a "vapour" (Prov. xxi. 6, and perhaps Ps. lxii. 9, cf. Jas. iv. 14). It is "an exhalation, which comes into visible existence without force or effort, has no vigour, and rapidly vanishes into nothing"[2]. We may therefore here translate, "A breath of breaths." The combination has the force of a superlative, cf. "the most holy," lit. "the holy of holies" (Ex. xxvi. 33), "the Song of songs" (Cant. i. 1), "the heaven of heavens" (1 K. viii. 27). So here, "the merest breath." But the word as used in this book is of wider figurative content than our word "breath," and sometimes must be translated otherwise. It never (not even in i. 2, xii. 8) has the connotation of "illusion." Burkitt thinks "bubble" is the best poetical translation, though he confesses that it is not a scientific equivalent.

It should be noted that even St Paul insists on the subjection of Creation, as it is, to "vanity" (ματαιότης), but he adds that this was not inherent but (apparently) the result of the Fall, and that it will not last for ever (Rom. viii. 20 *sq.*).

saith] If this verse is an addition by the Editor, it is better translated "said."

all is vanity] iii. 19, xii. 8 †. Observe that Qoh. does not say "everything" but "all" (lit. "the all") is vanity. The totality of the universe, including human existence, is a mere breath.

[1] The best MS. (Amiatinus) has *vanitantium* twice in this verse, a reading known to Augustine (*Retract.* I. vii. 3). It was probably a mere slip, for such a form occurs nowhere else.

[2] See Burkitt, *Journ. of Theolog. Studies*, Oct. 1921, p. 27.

3 vanities, all is vanity. What profit hath man of all his
4 labour wherein he laboureth under the sun? One genera-

3. The Subject stated.

3. *profit* (*yithrôn*)] ten times in Eccles. †, its cognates *yôther* seven times, and once in Isaiah †, and *môthar* once in Eccles. and twice in Prov. †. It is a metaphor taken from a business transaction, and means that which remains over when this is completed.

hath man] The noun has the definite article, and there is often doubt, as here, whether the term is used generically (R.V.), or with a kind of deictic force of the article "the man" or in our less vivid but idiomatic Eng. "a man" (A.V.), cf. vi. 7, note. The latter is preferable.

of all his labour wherein he laboureth] Better "in all his toil which he toileth." The thought is not exactly profit arising *out of* the toil, but profit in it and by it. *all*, the total sum of the man's toil. In it, when all is reckoned up, there is no profit accruing at the end.

The Targ., after its manner, refers the question to the time after death, and says that the only profit lies in studying and obeying the Law, for that will bring full payment hereafter. But this is to read into the verse, in the first place, a reference to the Law as such, of which the author nowhere makes express mention, and, secondly, anticipation of the additions to the Book made by the Editor.

under the sun] In Eccles. 30 times †. So in a Phoenician inscription of c. 290 B.C., "Mayest thou have no seed among the living under (the) sun," and in another of about 275 B.C., "nor any comeliness among the living under (the) sun." (See G. A. Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, Nos. **4**, l. 7, and **5**, l. 12.) Euripides says οὐκέτ' ἔστιν ὑφ' ἡλίῳ of ceasing to live (*Alc.* 394), and other references to the idea may be seen in Lidd. and Scott, but it seems too obvious to permit of the deduction that the author derived it from Greek sources. It is a wide expression, meaning, Wherever the sun gives light for work and life. Compare "under heaven," i. 13, ii. 3, and in other books. The phrase "before the sun" (Num. xxv. 4; 2 Sam. xii. 12) points more directly to the sun as witness of what is done.

4—11. The Sameness of Nature.

There is no profit (*v.* 3), for indeed men themselves are ever changing (*v.* 4), and even the powers of nature fail to attain their end (*vv.* 5—8). No, there is nothing new (*v.* 9), though at first there may seem to be (*v.* 10), for even people are forgotten, past and future (*v.* 11).

4. *One generation goeth, and another generation cometh*] The verbs are expressed by participles in the Hebrew, which lay stress on the *continuance* of change.

tion goeth, and another generation cometh; and the earth abideth for ever. The sun also ariseth, and the sun goeth 5 down, and hasteth to his place where he ariseth. The 6 wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto

and the earth abideth for ever] Men are ever passing, though earth stands firm. "*Quid hac vanius vanitate, quam terram manere, quae hominum caussa facta est: et ipsum hominem terrae dominum, in pulverem repente dissolvi*" (Jer. col. 387)?

abideth] Literally, "standeth," but the sense of "remaining firm" is too common for the theory to be deduced that the author thought the earth stood on pillars, as the author of 1 Sam. ii. 8 poetically writes. Corn. a Lap. 1637, in opposition to Galileo, reminds us that "*Congregatio Cardinalium sub Paulo V, anno Christi* 1616, *die quinta Martii, praesente Cardinali Bellarmino, ex hoc Salomonis loco damnavit Copernici sententiam, quae docet terram moveri.*"

for ever] This again is no dogmatic assertion that the material world will never cease. It only suggests the contrast of the comparative permanence of the earth with the fleeting forms of men.

5. *The sun also*] Better simply, "and the sun." The author is giving another example of the unsatisfactoriness of things.

ariseth] Heb. *zārach*. The root idea (see Assyr. and Arab.), is "shine," "beam forth" (Deut. xxxiii. 2; Isa. lx. 1; lviii. 10; *al.*), but it is often connected with the rising of the sun (Judg. ix. 33), as here. The first half of this verse is used very frequently in Rabbinic (e.g. T.B. *Yoma*, 38 *b*) to express the fact that before one great man dies another arises, e.g. Eli—Samuel, Samuel—David.

The Qoran (*Sura* vi. 76) tells of Abraham seeing a star rise, and "he said, 'This (is) my Lord.' And when it set, he said, 'I do not love (Gods) that set.'"

and hasteth to his place where he ariseth] *Hasteth*, not "returneth" (ἐπαναστρέφει, Symm. and Theod.), or "draweth on" (ἕλκει, LXX), but "panteth" (εἱσπνεῖ, Aq.), as in a race, eager to reach the goal, cf. Ps. cxix, 131; Job vii. 2; Am. ii. 7. The sun is imagined as hurrying on underneath the earth during the night from west to east, to the very same place where he always rises.

6. *The wind*] Round and round it goes; its change of action is never real, only apparent.

the south (*darôm*)] Of the seven words in the O.T. so translated in the A.V. this perhaps expresses most clearly the south in general from the point of view of the speaker, as distinguished from a geographical connotation of a district (*negeb*) or a *place* (*têman*). Its root-signification is unknown, but it has been connected with an Arabic word meaning "glowing," or "burning." It occurs in xi. 3 (with the article); Deut. xxxiii. 23; Job xxxvii.

the north; it turneth about continually in its course, and
7 the wind returneth again to its circuits. All the [1]rivers
run into the sea, yet the sea is not full; unto the place

[1] Or, *torrents*

17; Ezek. xx. 46 (without it), and twelve times in Ezek. xl.—xlii. (with it).

and turneth about] The Heb. root comes four times in this verse though twice disguised in Eng. under "continually in its course," and "its circuits." The literal translation is "Going to the south, and circling to the north, circling, circling, is the wind going, and on its circuits returneth the wind." For the participles see *v.* 4, note on *one generation*. It means to circle in motion; so of Joshua round Jericho (Josh. vi. 3), cf. also of the Israelites going round Mount Seir (Deut. ii. 1, 3).

unto the north] It has been suggested that north and south are mentioned because they are the prevailing winds, but this is not actually the case. Probably the assonance of *darôm* and *tsaphôn* had to do with the choice, in preference to east and west. In Cant. iv. 16, however, it is, "Arise O north (wind), and come, O south (*têman*)."

to its circuits] "according to its circuits," A.V. Better, and quite literally, "on its circuits." The way it took before, that way it takes again. The meaning of the plural noun seems certain from the context, but always elsewhere it is used of parts or districts round something (e.g. Num. xxii. 4), or with the force of a preposition, "round about" (e.g. 2 K. vi. 17).

7. Another example of the futility of existence. The mountain streams flow into the sea, which is never satisfied, and they start again on the same course.

All the rivers] The margin is better, "torrents," i.e. the *wadis*, which are dry in summer but often tempestuous torrents after rain.

run] Idiomatic Eng., but the Hebrew is the same word as that translated "go" in *vv.* 4, 6. It does not suggest haste.

into the sea, yet the sea is not full] A commonplace. Aristophanes says in the *Clouds* (423 B.C., l. 1294, Dindorf),

αὕτη μὲν (ἡ θάλαττα)...οὐδὲν γίγνεται
ἐπιρρεόντων τῶν ποταμῶν πλείων.

"The sea, though all the rivers flow to it,
Increaseth not in volume." (Plu.)

Possibly for "is not full" we should translate "overfloweth not," as in Josh. iii. 15.

unto the place whither the rivers go, thither they go again] *The place whither* is the sea, and thither they go again. The author assumes that they have some way by which they return from the sea to their first starting place, and thence they start to the sea

whither the rivers go, thither they go again. [1]All things 8
are full of weariness; man cannot utter *it*: the eye is not

[1] Or, *All words are feeble*

whither they have gone before, but he has no idea of evaporation. His belief was probably that which is expressed by the Targ.: "all the streams and springs of water go and flow into the waters of the ocean, which surrounds the world like a signet-ring, and the ocean does not grow full. And to the place where they go and flow thither they go again by the pipes of the deep."

Lucretius (c. 55 B.C., VI. 631—637) has a similar thought:

> Postremo quoniam raro cum corpore tellus
> Est, et coniunctast oris maris, undique cingens,
> Debet, ut in mare de terris venit umor aquai,
> In terras itidem manare ex aequore salso;
> Percolatur enim virus, retroque remanat
> Materies umoris, et ad caput amnibus omnis
> Confluit; inde super terras redit agmine dulci.
>
> "Lastly since earth has open pores and rare,
> And borders on the sea, and girds its shores,
> Need must its waters, as from earth to sea
> They flow, flow back again from sea to earth,
> And so the brackish taint is filtered off
> And to the source the water back distils,
> And from fresh fountains streams o'er all the fields." (Plu.)

The translation of the A.V., it may be noticed, is hardly possible, "unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again," though in itself it gives good sense, and corresponds to Symm. *εἰς τὸν τόπον ἀφ' οὗ οἱ ποταμοὶ πορεύονται, ἐκεῖ αὐτοὶ ἀναστρέφουσιν*, and to the Vulg., *ad locum, unde exeunt flumina, revertentur ut iterum fluant*..

For the meaning of "whither" given to the relative, see Num. xiii. 27; Josh. i. 16; 1 K. xii. 2.

8. *All things*] The common Hebrew word *dᵉbārīm* means either "words" or "things," but the second meaning is clear in *v.* 10, and is preferable here. So the Vulg. (*res*). The LXX understands "words" (*οἱ λόγοι*). Pesh. uses an ambiguous term, as also the Targ. which (*more suo*) seems to take first one meaning and then another. A.V. has "things"; R.V. marg. "words."

full of weariness] The reference is not to mere fatigue and feeling tired as the adjective means in Deut. xxv. 18; 2 Sam. xvii. 2 †; cf. Job iii. 17 and see also *infra*, xii. 12. See Ecclus. xi. 11, where active labour is implied. It is probably "wearisome toil." The A.V. "full of labour" is hardly strong enough. The author sums up his previous statements, and implies, What good is there though they do toil? It may be noted that the R.V. marg. is doubly wrong, "all words are feeble."

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9 satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. That
which hath been is that which shall be; and that which
hath been done is that which shall be done: and there is
10 no new thing under the sun. Is there a thing whereof
men say, See, this is new? it hath been already, in the

man cannot utter it] So also A.V. In the Eng. versions, "it" is the "weariness" or the "labour." And so Zap., McN. and others. But it is simpler to refer the verb to "all things"; they are more than man can tell of, with the connotation that if they could be mentioned one by one it would be found that they would all show the same toil.

The Vulg. gives one side of the truth contained in the clause: *Cunctae res difficiles: non potest eas explicare sermone.*

the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing] There is no reference here (contrast iii. 11) to the limitless craving of the eye and ear, but only to the simple fact that they are incapable of grasping all that there is.

with . . . . with] There is a slight difference in the Heb., which can be expressed only by a paraphrase. "Eye is not satisfied for (or, 'in') seeing, and ear does not become filled by hearing." The construction of the last three words occurs again in vi. 3, "but his soul is not satisfied by prosperity." Plumptre recalls "fessus satiate videndi" (Lucret. II. 1037).

9. *That which hath been is that which shall be*] The world in general changes not (*vv.* 4—8); nor do the works of man. Men too produce nothing new. The first clause of the verse states this broadly of everything connected with man, the second specifically of his actions; the third sums up all in a phrase, "and there is no new thing under the sun." The same thought recurs in iii. 15 with a different *nuance*.

That which] The LXX and Vulg. take this as a question, *Quid est quod fuit?* and so the next clause. But wrongly.

under the sun] *v.* 3, note.

10. *Is there*] So Symm. and Jer. But it is preferable to take the clause as an hypothesis "If there be."

whereof men say] Literally, "whereof one says." For the construction "whereof," see xii. 1.

See, this is new] This reads naturally, and the absolute character of "see" is confirmed by vii. 27, 29. The sentence will then run literally, "See! (as for) this, it is new." Cf. ii. 23, iv. 8, v. 18, vi. 2. It is probably an early form of the construction in *v.* 17 (*zeh hu'*), which became the *zehu* of the Mishna. But the accentuation suggests (we cannot say more, in view of vii. 29 where the change from vii. 27 is probably for euphony), "see this, it is new."

it hath been already, in the ages] *already* (*kbār*). In Biblical Heb. peculiar to this book (eight times).

ages which were before us. There is no remembrance of 11
the former *generations*; neither shall there be any remembrance of the latter *generations* that are to come, among those that shall come after.

in] This is the best Eng. translation, for the preposition (ל) is used in the widest possible sense, i.e. "belonging to" in some way or other. And so in the next verse.

the ages which were] The verb is in the singular, "the ages" being treated as a collective. So in ii. 7 the very literal translation is, "and sons-of-house *was* to me." Yet it is more likely that the verb has been repeated accidentally from the phrase immediately preceding, lit. "which *was* already." Observe that Qoh. here gives no hint of cycles of ages and of human affairs, such as we find in Greek and Latin writers. He thinks only of long past ages and the sameness of action continued to our own time (cf. Introd. p. xxxi).

before us (*mi-lphānênu*)] The LXX attempts to render this by ἀπὸ ἔμπροσθεν ἡμῶν, an extraordinarily literal rendering which suggests the hand of Aq. See Introd. p. lii. The full phrase is found in the 1st pers. plur. here only, but often in other persons. It represents a later stage in the language than the simple *mippānay*, and is used of time here only; cf. Isa. xli. 26. Compare the end of Seneca's noble letter to Lucilius (*Ep.* XXIV), "*Omnia sic transeunt ut revertantur. nihil novi facio, nihil novi video.*" ("All things pass away in such a manner that they may return again; I do nothing new, I see nothing new.")

11. *There is no remembrance of the former* generations] (1) The A.V. has "*the former* things," following the Vulg., *non est priorum memoria: sed nec eorum quidem quae*, etc. So Jastrow "former occurrences." This gives good sense, for *vv.* 9, 10 have referred only to things. But the word for "former things" is elsewhere in the fem., Isa. xli. 22, xlii. 9, xliii. 9, 18, xlvi. 9, xlviii. 3, lxv. 17. Yet this is not decisive, for the masc. here may well be due to the plural of "thing" (*v.* 10) being understood. And with this interpretation the contrast between "Is there" (*v.* 10) and "There is no" (*v.* 11) is made vivid. (2) Most moderns however agree with the R.V. in referring it to persons. The thought then is, Not only has every *thing* already been (*v.* 10), but even *persons* are also forgotten. Qoh. began (*v.* 3) by asking, What gain does a man get? He ends by saying he is not even remembered long after his death, cf. ix. 5. On the whole, the reference is probably to persons.

the latter generations] There is the same question in this phrase, but the fem. plural of "the latter" does not occur. The masc. is used of persons in iv. 16.

among those that shall come after] This use of the preposition (*'im*) in the sense of remembrance "with" or "in the mind of" is not un-

12 I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. And
13 I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom

common, and is preferable here. But it has been suggested that the meaning is as in ii. 16, "together with the fool" (Wild., Zap.). The meaning will then be "There is no remembrance of former people (now); and also of latter people who shall be (in the future) —of them there shall be no remembrance, together with (i.e. 'nor again of') those who shall be later (still)."

after] Lit. "in the hereafter," i.e. in later time on earth. The Targum expressly refers it to the days of Messiah, but this is pointless in the context.

12—18. Qoh. has spoken of the depressing sameness of all nature and the transitoriness of human life. Here he enlarges on the futility of the world in general (*vv.* 12—15), and then says that even wisdom brought sorrow. And he had had every opportunity of judging! His position and opportunities had been of the highest (*vv.* 16—18).

12. *I . . . . was*] This is the simple "perfect" tense in the Hebrew, which may be represented either by our perfect, "I have been" (and still am) or our past "I was." On the whole, the latter meaning is more probable here. The old king is pictured as looking back at the energy and strength of his youth, and saying, I was king then—now I regard it all from another point of view! Of Louis XIV we are told, "Vers les derniers jours de sa vie, renonçant aux intérêts terrestres, il négligea tous les autres soins, pour ne plus penser qu'à Dieu, et uniquement occupé de son néant on l'entendit souvent s'écrier 'Quand j'étois roi!'" (*Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, xxxi. 834, quoted by Bullock in the *Speaker's Commentary*, p. 623).

in Jerusalem] *v.* 1, note.

13. *my heart*] It is important to bear in mind that "heart" in Hebrew does not mean primarily the affections, as with us, but the mind, the intelligence, and then the conscious man, including intellect and emotion; cf. iii. 11.

For the whole phrase, see also *v.* 17, viii. 9, 16.

to seek (*lidrōsh*)] The word is the widest in signification that could be used. It is to inquire, to investigate, to ask questions with the view of obtaining a satisfactory answer.

and to search out] So also ii. 3, vii. 25 (Eccles. †). See also, ix. 1, note. The word is used of God searching out a place for Israel in the wilderness, Num. x. 33; Deut. i. 33, and "espying" Palestine for them (Ezek. xx. 6); and in particular of the spies searching out the Holy Land, Num. xiii. 16 *al.* It suggests therefore here the work of a pioneer in knowledge. The LXX translation is κατασκέψασθαι, Aq. ἐξερευνῆσαι, Symm. διαθρῆσαι, Vulg. *investigare*. Wild. even supposes that the author is employing a Graecism here and ii. 3, translating the philosophical term σκέπτεσθαι.

concerning all that is done under heaven: it is a sore travail that God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. I have seen all the works that are 14
done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and [1]a

[1] Or, *a feeding on wind* Or, *vexation of spirit* and so elsewhere.

by wisdom] The force of the definite article in the original is probably, "by the wisdom that I have."

heaven] ii. 3, iii. 1, x. 20 (Eccles. †). In *vv.* 3, 14, "under the sun," and a variant but improbable reading here.

it is a sore travail, etc.] The A.V. "this sore travail" is an impossible rendering, and, in any case, the "it" (*hu'*) is strange and should be omitted. It is absent in Vulg., Pesh. and rendered ὅτι in LXX. Readers will notice that the following words strongly resemble iii. 10. Perhaps they were introduced thence, the "it" being prefixed to them in a marginal note, as much as to say, "This corresponds to" the passage in iii. 10. In the Midrashim we have something similar, "This is that which is written," or "This is that which the scripture saith" (*zeh hu', zehu*). The Heb. has after "it" a small perpendicular line called *pāṣêq*, belonging to one of the later strata of the Masoretic text, the use of which is never very certain, but appears to mean here our *sic!*, implying that the text at this point is rather strange, but must be so read. (See Bauer u. Leander, *Historische Grammatik*, 1918, I. 156—62). Cf. iv. 1.

a sore travail] The substantive (עִנְיָן) comes in Eccles. only in Biblical Heb., ii. 23, 26, iii. 10, iv. 8, v. 3, 14, viii. 16. In v. 2 it plainly means "occupation," "business," and so doubtless here, with Symmachus (ἀσχολίαν) and Vulg. *occupationem pessimam*. Translate the clause, "An ill business!"

to be exercised therewith (*la^{a}nôth bô*)] The verb here gathers its meaning from its cognate substantive immediately preceding (=iii. 10), and the more easily, as that meaning of the root is common in Aramaic.

The thought of this second half of the verse is, God has put into man's heart the desire to search out everything. But this is an ill task because the desire cannot be satisfied. The answer is given in iii. 11, which follows the saying in its original setting.

14. *I have seen*] Here Qoh. begins to dwell no longer on the sameness or even the infinity (*v.* 13 *b*) of things, but on their imperfection. The expression is very common in Qoheleth, which speaks much of observation by the writer of all kinds of facts. It states the result of his experience of this or that subject, which he is about to describe.

all the works] i.e. of man not God, for the works of God are not "vanity," etc.

a striving after wind] ii. 11, 17, 26, iv. 4, 6, vi. 9, cf. also, i. 17.

15 striving after wind. That which is crooked cannot be
made straight: and [1]that which is wanting cannot be
16 numbered. I communed with mine own heart, saying,

[1] Heb. *defect.*

ii. 22, iv. 16. The A.V. "vexation of spirit" represents the Vulg. Pesh. Targ. deriving the first word (*r'ûth*) from the root רעע. But the form of the substantive makes the derivation from רעה much more probable. This may mean: (1) "feeding upon" (Aq., Theod., *νομὴ ἀνέμου*; Symm., *βόσκησις ἀνέμου*), or better (2) "striving after." See Prov. xv. 14, where *yir'eh* is parallel to "seeketh," and especially Hos. xii. 1, where *rô'eh rûach* is parallel to "pursueth after the east wind," cf. ch. v. 16. It is probable too that this meaning the more readily suggested itself to the writer, in that the same root in Aram. means "takes pleasure in." The LXX *προαίρεσις πνεύματος* seems to combine the true meaning of the first with the wrong meaning of the second substantive. But in both Heb. and Greek the word for "wind" is ambiguous.

15. The first of the many proverb-like sayings in the book.

That which is crooked] A participle of a verb (*'iwweth*) which occurs elsewhere in this book in vii. 13, xii. 3, only, and means, in the passive as here, not that which is crooked by nature, so to speak, but that which has been made so. The first three words should be omitted, as also the corresponding three in the second half of the verse. The saying may refer to this or that thing, and so it seems to be always understood. But it has a closer connexion with the preceding verse if it refers to the whole of the existing works of man. "Crooked! it cannot become straight! And a deficiency! It cannot be reckoned up." Observe that in vii. 13 the perversion is attributed to God.

The Vulg., Targ. and perhaps Pesh. understand the saying to refer to men, with their perverted nature and their limitations. But this is to introduce a thought quite distinct from the context.

be made straight] The verb (*TQN*) is found here only in the Qal voice, but in the Piel vii. 13, xii. 9, and in the Aramaic of Dan. iv. 36 †. A thing that has been made crooked by powers outside itself cannot become straight by its own powers. The LXX, *ἐπικοσμηθῆναι*, suggests a usage of the word which is found in the later Targums, "to be adorned as a bride" (Targ. Hos. ii. 15).

and that which is wanting (*cheṣrôn* †)] In this form or *chiṣṣārôn* the word comes fairly often in later Hebrew (though not in the Mishna) in the sense of "deficiency," "scarcity," and especially "deficit" in money matters. The last is the meaning here. Regarded as a business transaction, the assets of the world run short, and they cannot make up the full amount!

cannot be numbered (*lhimmānôth*)] The verb is in the Niphal voice, Gen. xiii. 16; 1 K. iii. 8, viii. 5 (‖ 2 Chr. v. 6); Isa. liii. 12 †. A deficit cannot get itself numbered, i.e. sufficiently. The meaning

Lo, I have gotten me great wisdom [1]above all that were before me [2]in Jerusalem: yea, my heart [3]hath had great

[1] Or, *yea, more than all* [2] Heb. *over.*
[3] Heb. *hath seen abundantly.*

seems to be as above, and is expressed by Symm. (καὶ) *ὑστέρημα μὴ δυνάμενον ἀναπληρῶσαι ἀριθμόν* (cf. a variant of the Pesh.), but it is unnecessary to presuppose for this, or to accept on poor manuscript evidence, *lhimmālôth* ("be filled"). The Vulg. translates the whole verse, *Perversi difficile corriguntur, et stultorum infinitus est numerus.* It appears to have read *cheṣrôn* as *ch^{a}sērîm*, "defectives," though there seems to be no evidence of this use of the word when employed absolutely. Compare *ch^{a}ṣar lēb*, "lacking understanding," Prov. vi. 32, *al.*

16—18. He has shown the failure of the world in general; here he adds that wisdom itself brings sorrow.

16. *I communed with mine own heart.* The phrase seems to be unique, and is rather stronger than "I spake *in* my heart" (ii. 1, iii. 17 *sq. al.*). To "speak with" persons is common, and suggests mutual intercourse (Gen. xxix. 9 *al.*); here therefore 'commune with." The "I" is emphatic both here and in the next clause; this is my deliberate conviction after considering the subject.

Lo, I have gotten me great wisdom] A good paraphrase for two verbs, the second of which modifies the first; literally, "I have made great and increased." Zap. argues that the metre requires the omission either of "I" or of "wisdom," and preferring to omit the latter translates like ii. 9, "Lo, I was great, and increased more," etc. The Hiphil form of the verb in our verse will bear this translation ("Lo, I am come to great estate," A.V.), but it is not probable. The so-called requirement of the metre depends on the certainty that the true metre has been discovered—and this is doubtful.

above all that were before me] The Heb. (contrast ii. 7) does not connote a succession of persons as clearly as does the Eng., for "were" is literally "was." The writer may therefore be thinking of the sum total of his predecessors, many or few, successive or contemporary. The phrase is thus not quite inconsistent with the identification of Qoh. with Solomon.

in Jerusalem] So expressly in ii. 7, 9 (*bîrûshālaim*), but the preposition here is *'al*, which is literally "over." It is true that this preposition is used widely, as, for example, of contiguity (Gen. xiv. 6), of being "at" a table or meal (2 Sam. ix. 7, 10; Ex. xvi. 3), and of the direction of the mind (Jer. xxii. 17), so that it is possible that it is here only a synonym for "in," but in the absence of any exact parallel it is safer to understand it of oversight. If so the reference is to those who either were kings

17 experience of wisdom and knowledge. And I applied my
heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly:
18 I perceived that this also was a striving after wind. For

over Jerusalem or at least held some high official position there. (McN.)

yea, my heart hath had great experience of wisdom and knowledge] Lit. "and my heart saw much wisdom and knowledge." Before, he says that his deliberate conviction was that he himself had gained more wisdom than any before him. Here he restates as a positive fact that his mind had had much experience of it.

It is just possible to take this half of *v.* 16 as the protasis to *v.* 17, And when my heart, etc., then I gave my heart.

wisdom (*chokmāh*) *and knowledge* (*da'ath*)] The difference of the Heb. words corresponds fairly exactly to that of the Eng., save that *chokmāh* is perhaps used more of practical commonsense, especially in Divine things, than is our Eng. *wisdom*.

17. *And I applied my heart*] *v.* 13, note.

And] Simply the conjunction, but here, as often, probably with the *nuance* of "so." His action is the outcome of his deliberation and of the fact of his experience (*v.* 16).

The verb is in the cohortative form, which connotes the will and purposefulness of the speaker in his action.

and to know] There is a slight change in the Heb., giving, literally, "and the knowledge of." But the versions (LXX, Vulg., Pesh., Targ.) less probably read "and knowledge" (*wāda'ath*), joining "knowledge" to *wisdom*. In this case Qoh. devoted his powers to know wisdom and knowledge on the one hand, and madness and folly on the other.

madness (*hôlēlôth*)] So ii. 12, vii. 25, ix. 3 †, and *hôlēlûth*, x. 13 †. The termination *-ôth* for the fem. sing. is so rare (*'ashpôth*, "dung-hill," perhaps *chŏkmôth*, "wisdom") that in x. 13 the commoner ending *-ûth* was used by some copyist. Save for treating the ending as a plural, Theod. translates it rightly, παραφοράς ("derangements"), and this would appear to have been the original translation of the LXX now corrupted into παραβολάς (followed by Pesh.). For the LXX has παραφοράν in ii. 12, περιφοράν in vii. 25 and in ii. 2 for the same root, περιφέρεια in ix. 3 and x. 13. Aq. has the vaguer πλάνας which the Vulg. copies in *errores*. The Targ. has "the trickery of the government" (*chulchaltā' dmalkûtha'*).

and folly] The form *siklûth* with י occurs here only, but *śiklûth* with ם is common (e.g. ii. 3). Our text is probably a mere copyist's slip, but if so it is a very unfortunate one, for with יִ the word means "intelligence." In any case it is as old as the LXX which translates here ἐπιστήμην (+Pesh., Targ.). For similar changes of "s" see Driver on 1 Sam. v. 9; 2 Sam. i. 22.

a striving after wind] The form of the word translated "striving"

in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.

(*ra'yón*, ii. 22, iv. 16 †) is so akin to that which is found in *v.* 14 that it is sufficient to refer to the note there.

One question has been left unnoticed, the genuineness of *And I applied my heart to know wisdom, and to know.* In the LXX this is omitted altogether by some important MSS. (e.g. 68), and also by Clem. Alex., and the Coptic, while in the Syro-Hexaplar it is marked with a *. It follows *Jerusalem* (*v.* 16) in three MSS. of the LXX. But it comes where we have it in AB and other MSS. Pesh., Jer., i.e. after "knowledge" (*v.* 16). Probably its omission is due to the Greek copyist's eye passing from γνῶσιν to γνῶσιν, but possibly it was absent from the original Hebrew text. So McN., to whom reference should be made for the full authorities for each reading.

18. Devotion to wisdom and knowledge is not only unsatisfying (*v.* 17), it is much worse. For much wisdom means much vexation, and increase of knowledge, sorrow. So painful is the experience of life when duly weighed. Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* III. iv. 7, discusses the thesis, "*Videtur mihi cadere in sapientem aegritudo*" ("sickness seems to me to be the lot of the wise"). Observe how naturally Qoh. frames his thought in a proverb-like sentence.

grief] Better "vexation."

The English translators show singular variety in their translation of the word *ka'as* in this book; here and ii. 23, "grief"; vii. 3 and xi. 10, "sorrow" (A.V. marg. "anger," R.V. marg. "vexation," "provocation"); vii. 9, "anger" (R.V. marg. "vexation"). The verb comes twice in Eccles., v. 17, "he is sore vexed" (R.V.), "he hath much sorrow" (A.V.); vii. 9, "to be angry" (A.V., R.V.), "vexed" (R.V. marg.).

In our passage the LXX strangely reads γνώσεως ("knowledge") probably by a mere slip of the copyist, for the verb and substantive occur five times in five or six lines.

and he that increaseth . . . . increaseth] The construction is the same as Prov. xii. 17, xviii. 22.

sorrow] The root occurs elsewhere in Eccles. only in ii. 23, where the same substantive (*mak'ób*) is in the plural, as also in Isa. liii. 4.

CH. II. 1—11. THE MORE MATERIAL JOYS OF LIFE ARE UNSATISFYING.

He tries both wisdom and folly, to see what is best (*vv.* 1—3). He plays the part of a rich landlord and luxurious housekeeper (*vv.* 4—8). He is greater than his predecessors, still maintaining his wisdom, and gets every thing he desires (*vv.* 9, 10). But all is a breath, and there is no profit anywhere (*v.* 11).

2 I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with
mirth; [1]therefore enjoy [2]pleasure: and, behold, this also
2 was vanity. I said of laughter, It is mad: and of mirth,
3 What doeth it? I searched in mine heart how to cheer

[1] Or, *and thou shalt enjoy* [2] Or, *good*

1. *I said in mine heart*] There is no suggestion of his heart replying, as in i. 16. Nor does he directly speak *to* it (Pesh.), before the next clause. For the idea both in language and in subject matter, see Lk. xii. 17—19.

Go to now] This colloquial idiom is used in the Heb. to Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 14), to Balaam (Num. xxii. 6), to the Levite (Judg. xix. 11), and others, of going in a physical sense. Here the heart is bid go metaphorically and enjoy pleasures.

I will prove thee] I will test thee to see if thou art more satisfied with a new method than with the preceding. Comp. Ex. xvi. 4; Dan. i. 14.

mirth] It is "joy" in the widest sense of the word, but here limited by the context to earthly, not spiritual, joy.

therefore enjoy pleasure] Literally, "and look on good"; take thy fill in gazing on the good things of life. The Heb. phrase is not uncommon, e.g. Cant. iii. 11, vi. 11; Mic. vii. 9. In iii. 22 it has a rather weaker sense. The phrase in i. 16, iii. 13, is not quite identical.

pleasure] The same word is translated "good things" in Job xxii. 18.

2. The author's verdict on laughter and joy is summarily given. The former seems to him mad, the latter powerless. Observe that this is not the verdict of a typical Hebrew, to whom in all ages the natural joys of life have been very real, and thankfully taken. For he has always connected them with God. So Nehemiah bids the people eat and drink and send portions to the poor, "for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye grieved; for the joy of the LORD is your strong hold" (Neh. viii. 10, R.V. marg.).

I said of] More probably "I said to," for laughter and joy are personified. Hence translate, "Thou art mad....What doest thou?" (*vide infra*).

mad] The same root as in i. 17.

What doeth it] Or rather, "what doest (thou)," *vide supra*. After the *What* (*mah*) there is an enclitic (*mah-zôh*) which only strengthens the *what*. But some would translate it by "this" (*v.* 24 *al.*)—"What does this do?"

3. The author examines first the worth of the sensual pleasures of the table, summed up by him as wine, and folly in general.

I searched in] Better "with," using his *heart* as his instrument (i. 13, notes).

my flesh with wine, mine heart yet [1]guiding *me* with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see

[1] Or, *holding its course*

how to] Slightly misleading, for the stress of the thought is not on the method but on the result. His search had for its issue "to cheer," etc.

to cheer] The Heb. verb is properly "to draw," "draw out," "prolong," and perhaps "attract" (Jer. xxxi. 3), but never in Biblical usage "cheer." In later Heb. it is used of conducting water in irrigation, and hence there is the metaphor, "The Haggadists, who draw the heart of a man as (one conducts) water" (T.B. *Chagiga*, 14 *a*), which comes very near that of "attract." So too in the common text of T.B. *Sabb.* 87 *a*, Moses reported to the LORD (Ex. xix. 9) words "which *attract* the heart of man like Haggada," but the right text has not our word, but "which quiet," etc. In the *Siphrê* on Deut. xxxii. 14, § 317 (p. 135 *b*, Friedmann) is, "These are Haggadoth which attract the heart of man like wine." The last is the only passage which can mean "expand" or "cheer." It is therefore better to adhere to the meaning "attract" in our passage. So the LXX, ἑλκύσει (*vide infra*). Yet it is just possible to translate "prolong" in the sense of spending time in carnal enjoyment in wine. On the other hand "pamper" (Jewish-American Version) seems quite unwarranted.

my flesh] i.e. my body, the solely physical part of myself.

with wine] Mentioned as the supreme pleasure of the table, but not excluding its accompaniments.

mine heart] The Heb. word for *heart* has a much less *emotional nuance* than our word. It is rather the intellect, or almost the personality.

yet guiding me *with wisdom*. Only here has the verb a metaphorical meaning, and only here, with the possible exception of 2 K. ix. 20, can it be intransitive, "conducting itself," though this meaning is common in later Heb. The R.V. may be accepted, for the A.V. "yet acquainting my heart with wisdom" is very improbable, though suggested by Symm., ἵνα τὴν καρδίαν μου μεταγάγω εἰς σοφίαν, and the Vulg. *ut animum meum transferrem ad sapientiam*. Observe that Qoh. does not mean that he mixes a little wisdom in all he does, but that he indulges himself freely, keeping, as it were, his other self at liberty to examine and criticise. No doubt this is in reality an impossible position for an assured believer or a truly deep thinker, but Qoh. takes up the rôle of a doubter and he is often superficial.

and how] See note above. But *how* is useful to show that the clause is connected with *I searched*, not with *guiding*.

to lay hold on] So vii. 18.

folly] i. 17, note. Not, it will be observed, sin, though folly may easily become sin. It is in itself something neutral, as is

what it was good for the sons of men that they should
4 do under the heaven [1]all the days of their life. I made
me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vine-
5 yards; I made me gardens and parks, and I planted trees

[1] Heb. *the number of the days of their life.*

enjoyment of wine, but yet opposed to the methods and pursuits of wisdom.

till I might see] Had the primary verb "I searched" been in the present or future the natural translation would have been "till I should see." As it is, we should say, "till I could see." The blunt "till I saw" would fail to express the subtle thought of the Heb. "tense," the "seeing" being regarded as the outcome of the search.

what it was good....that they should do] The interrogative pronominal expression (*'ê zeh*) is of very wide meaning, "where" or "which." It may here refer either to locality, or to differentiation of person or thing. In the former case it would be "where(in) lies the good....that." In the latter, which must be accepted in view of xi. 6, it is "which is good....that." Two paths have been proposed, Wisdom, and sensual enjoyment. Which is really good?

all the days of their life] Not the usual and very common word for "all," but "the number of the days," etc. This may be taken as "during the complete sum of the days," etc. as in v. 18, and probably vi. 12 (R.V., A.V.), or possibly, "during the few days of their life." Compare Num. ix. 20; Isa. x. 19.

4. The word "do" (*ya'ᵃsû*, *v.* 3) recalls Solomon's "works" (*ma'ᵃsêy*). Here they are cited as another form (less sensual than wine) of energy in material things.

The first clause states the fact in general. It is literally, "I made my works great," i.e. the works were my doing, and I made them of great size and reputation. Qoh. then particularises. *I builded me houses*, i.e. Solomon's own palace with its porticoes, the palace for Pharaoh's daughter, the house of the forest of Lebanon (1 K. vii. 1—9), and the various towns and buildings in the provinces mentioned in 1 K. ix. 15—19; 2 Chr. viii. 4—6. *I planted me vineyards*: in the historical books David's are mentioned (1 Chr. xxvii. 27), and a vineyard of Solomon's only in Cant. viii. 11. Qoh. perhaps derived his statement from this passage.

5. He had tried horticulture in the finest forms then known.

gardens] They are mentioned among the signs of peace and plenty in Amos ix. 14.

and parks (*pardesîm*)] The plural †, and the singular Neh. ii. 8; Cant. iv. 13 †. It is an Avestan word, *pairidaēza*, from *pairi*

in them of all kinds of fruit: I made me pools of water, 6

(=περί) and *daēza*, a heap. Thus literally "a circumvallation"; in Eng. "a close." It was *pardīsu* in later Assyrian and was also Graecised to παράδεισος, which however seems to have been used more widely, and of any garden not wholly kept for vegetables.

and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruit] Thus they were more than English "parks," for they included such trees as we should expect to be in orchards, e.g. pomegranates, Cant. iv. 13. Hence the Vulg. rendering of *pardeṣīm, pomaria.*

6. *I made me pools of water*] An Eastern writer passes naturally from the thought of gardens to that of the water supply, always more or less artificial, by which they are maintained. The "pools" here mentioned are much like the "tanks" of India, natural springs enlarged to reservoirs, small or large according to the nature of the supply, the demands made upon them, and the wealth and power at the disposal of those who made them.

Neh. ii. 14 mentions "the king's pool" at the S.E. corner of the walls of Jerusalem, called "Solomon's pool" by Josephus (*B.J.* v. iv. 2, § 145). But this must always have been a small affair. The traditional Pools of Solomon are about three miles S.E. of Bethlehem. They

"are three in number, and they have been formed by building solid dams of masonry across the valley of Urtas. They have a total capacity of 44,147,000 gallons and are so arranged that the water from each of the higher pools can be run off into the one immediately below it. The water was conveyed to Jerusalem by a conduit." (C. W. Wilson, H.D.B. IV. 19). "Within the narrow glen of Urtas, enclosed to right and left by rugged hill slopes, and watered by an ever-running brook, the most luscious apricots, peaches, pears, figs and other kinds of fruit were indeed grown, when, as a youth, I lived with my brothers in the flat-roofed, fortress-like house which stood on the eminence above our plantations. These fruit trees of Urtas, gay with innumerable blossoms or weighed down by fruit fit for the tables of kings and princes,—the bright blue sky seen through the branches as I lay beneath them dreaming,—the singing of the birds, the murmur of the brook,—and the fragrant odour of the plants on which our bees found so plentiful a harvest made up a never-to-be-forgotten picture.... Between 1573 and 1575 the valley was visited by a distinguished botanist, Dr Leonardus Rauwolffus, who, enumerating the most remarkable plants, '*in horto Salomonis prope Bethleemam*' includes the pomegranate, the orange and the fig. Oranges are no longer grown there" (P. J. Baldensperger, *The Immovable East*, 1913, pp. 100, 109).

Herod the Great restored them. The new water supply of

to water therefrom the forest where trees were reared:
7 I bought menservants and maidens, and had servants
born in my house; also I had great possessions of herds
and flocks, above all that were before me in Jerusalem:

Jerusalem is pumped from a reservoir halfway between Solomon's Pools and Hebron.

to water therefrom the forest] The Heb. word (*ya'ar*), like the English, suggests a wild uncultivated and vigorously growing wood. Probably an Eastern potentate would delight in trying to reproduce in his own "park" the growth of trees brought to him from foreign lands or from very different soils.

where trees were reared] Literally, "sprouting in trees." The root-meaning of the participle (*tsŏmē^{a}ch*) is probably "shining," and the word suggests the "glittering" of new growth in contrast to the dulness of decay. The R.V. wrongly limits this to young trees, in fact a nursery. So perhaps also the Vulg., *silvam lignorum germinantium*. But in the East all other trees than the few which bear drought well require irrigation. The A.V. "that bringeth forth trees" makes the verb directly causative, for which no parallel example can be adduced.

7. The author, placing himself in the position of Solomon, now turns to his household operations. He becomes a landowner on a large scale, with many slaves and cattle. It must be remembered that slaves among the Hebrews were never considered mere chattels, as among the Greeks and Romans.

I bought] "I acquired" is better, for the verb is of wider signification than acquiring by purchase, however true this was in the present case. The A.V. "I gat *me*," has added "me" to make idiomatic English, but unlike the rest of *vv.* 4—8 this clause does not contain it in the Heb.

menservants and maidens] Some of Solomon's "bond-servants" were of the remnant of the Canaanite tribes, 1 K. ix. 21. The Targ. adds in our verse "of the children of Ham," i.e. members of the black races, and this meaning is probable (2 Sam. xviii. 21; Jer. xiii. 23, xxxviii. 7).

and had servants born in my house] Rather, "I had home-born servants." Children born to acquired slaves would, presumably, stand in a somewhat better position than their parents. Such was Eliezer (Gen. xv. 2). The meaning of the slightly different phrase in Gen. xiv. 14, xvii. 12; Jer. ii. 14 is the same.

herds and flocks] Solomon's possession of these is implied in 1 K. iv. 22 *sq.*, viii. 63; cf. 1 Chr. xxvii. 29, 31.

8. Qoh., still as though he were Solomon, next recalls the luxuries within his palace.

He may have felt the grief that Mazarin once expressed, "and I must leave all these!" pointing to the incomparable works of art that adorned his rooms.

I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar 8
treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men

I gathered me (*v.* 26, iii. 5, Eccles. †) *also silver and gold*] Probably not as money, or in bars, but in the form of ornaments, which, like the gold facings of the Temple, could be used on emergencies (2 K. xviii. 16).

and the peculiar treasure of (*ūsgullath*)] In Assyrian *sugullu* is "herd," but in Heb. the word *segullāh* is "property" as such, of an individual, apparently, in contrast to a community. The word occurs only eight times, in five of which it is used directly of Israel as the LORD'S property (Ex. xix. 5; Deut. vii. 6, xiv. 2, xxvi, 18; Ps. cxxxv. 4), once indirectly, but specially of the faithful in Israel (Mal. iii. 17), and of material things both in 1 Chr. xxix. 3, and in our passage, the personal property of kings, etc. Its history is thus very like that of the Latin *peculium* (from *pecus*, cattle), private property, but *segullāh* has not the further special connotation of *peculium*, the property acquired by slaves through personal presents, etc. Symm. translates in our passage περκούλια. The LXX had been content with περιουσιασμούς, as in Ps. cxxxv. 4.

Aldis Wright illustrates the English use of "peculiar" by a passage from Hall (*Hen. IV*, fol. 19 *b*), "But the Percies affirmyng them to be their owne propre prisoners and their *peculiar* praies, and to deliver theym utterly denayed" (*Bible Word-Book*, *s.v.*).

of kings and of the provinces] Observe the "the" which is a literal translation of the Hebrew. The force of it is probably "their" provinces, those which were under the kings and were obliged to send tribute. This would often consist of productions more or less permanent (e.g. ivory, skins, works of art, etc.) native to the province, including jewels and the precious metals. Aben Ezra's comment on *segullah* and up to this point in the verse is, "And the word *s*^{e}*gullah* means a desirable thing kept to take pleasure in, e.g. the precious stones which are found with kings, and desirable things are to be found in individual provinces."

the provinces (*hamm*^{e}*dînôth*)] The word is very common in Esther, and fairly frequent in the later books of the Bible. It is properly an Aram. word meaning the district in which a particular jurisdiction (*dîn*) runs. The author has been accused of using mere rhetoric by putting the term into the mouth of Solomon. But, after all, Solomon was for him only the ideally great king, and he would not feel himself bound by the historical limitations of Solomon's small empire.

I gat me] He passes to more sensual delights, music and its eastern accompaniments.

The verb is rather unusual, literally "I made me." It probably means "instituted" or "appointed" as in 2 Sam. xv. 1; 1 K. i. 5.

singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons
9 of men, [1]concubines very many. So I was great, and
increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem:
10 also my wisdom [2]remained with me. And whatsoever
mine eyes desired I kept not from them: I withheld

[1] Or, *musical instruments, and that of all sorts* The Sept. and Syriac render, *cupbearers, male and female*. The meaning of the Hebrew is very uncertain.

[2] Or, *stood by me*

men singers and women singers] i.e. minstrels male and female (2 Sam. xix. 35). For the singing voice was probably subsidiary to the musical instruments.

the delights] The Heb. word suggests a strongly emotional delight, verging upon the sensual.

concubines very many] This is doubtless the general meaning, but the phrase is very difficult in itself. See the Note at the end of this chapter.

9. A general statement of Qoh.'s continued superiority in wealth and fame over his predecessors, though he never lost the wisdom that enabled him to continue his investigation.

So I was great, and increased] Perhaps Del. is right in understanding after "increased" the idea of greatness from the preceding verb. He therefore translates, "And I became great, and was always greater than," etc. There does not appear to be any exact parallel, but cf. Prov. xix. 19. The Vulg. gives *et supergressus sum* (*opibus*, om. Am.) *omnes*.

remained with me] So LXX, Vulg., Pesh., rightly in view of *v.* 3. Lit. "stood to me." Hence the margin is possible, "stood by me," i.e. "gave me assistance" (Ewald, Ginsburg); cf. a similar phrase, but not identical in Heb., Dan. xii. 1; Esth. viii. 11, ix. 16. The Targ. has "remained with me and helped me." But Qoh. means only that "the seeker, though he plunged into the pleasures of a sensual life, was never altogether their slave" (Plu.).

10. Anything he said and wanted, he got, and he refused his heart no joy. For his heart did get joy out of all his toil, and in fact this was his reward. He failed in nothing, his plans succeeded, and gave him happiness—and yet he is obliged to add *v.* 11.

whatsoever mine eyes desired] Lit. "asked," and so LXX, ἤτησαν, but, less vividly, "desired" in Symm. ἐπεθύμησαν, and Vulg., *desideraverunt*. Only here are the eyes said to "ask."

In *Test. Reub.* ii. 4 we find that of the seven "spirits" given to man "the second was the spirit (sense) of sight, with which ariseth desire." So 1 Jn. ii. 16.

There is no hint of evil desire here, Qoh.'s "wisdom" kept him from that.

I kept not from them] The verb is rare and is properly "to keep

not my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced because of all my labour; and this was my portion from all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun. 11

back," "to reserve." So in Gen. xxvii. 36; Num. xi. 17, 25, but in Ezek. xlii. 6 of material that was narrowed †.

I withheld not] The common Heb. word, but here only of the heart.

for my heart rejoiced because of all my labour] So the Masoretic text, though the translation is a concession to the Eng. idiom. The phrase is literally "rejoiced from all" (cf. the next clause), meaning that whatever his labour was it was to him the source of joy. Each fresh toil brought him fresh happiness. So Symm., ἐκ πάσης φιλοπονίας μου. (For φιλοπ. see Ecclus. Prol. 19. Sw.†, cf. 12.) For a similar use of "from," see Prov. v. 18 "in" (R.V.).

and this was my portion from all my labour] He really got this out of all, and it is implied that it was all he got.

"Portion" in Ecclesiastes (*v.* 21, iii. 22, v. 18 *sq.*, ix. 6, 9, cf. xi. 2 †) is the share of good things that a man has. Qoh. finds his share (quite apart from any monetary gain) in the happiness he obtains from his toil.

11. Again he sums up the result of his investigations, described in *vv.* 1—10. It is the same as in i. 14, 17. All his work and pleasure is useless. It produces nothing solid, nothing that remains over when all is done.

Then I looked on] The same verb is translated in *v.* 12, "I turned myself," but it is often used alone of "turning the face," "looking." So with the same preposition in Job vi. 28. The "I" is emphatic, as also in *v.* 12, I who had done all that is stated in *vv.* 1—11.

and on the labour that I had laboured to do] Vulg. Am. has *et in labores quibus frustra sudaveram.*

striving] The form is the same as in i. 14.

profit] i. 3, note.

12—17. Wisdom and Folly.

After a transitional verse (*v.* 12) Qoh. says that Wisdom is far superior to Folly, for the wise man sees his way and the fool does not (*vv.* 13, 14 *a*). Yet what use in this when they die alike (*vv.* 14 *b*, 15), and both alike are forgotten (*v.* 16). Life is useless (*v.* 17).

On Qoh's references to Wisdom and Folly, see Introd. p. xliii.

12. Another subject is begun here, the consideration of wisdom and folly on their practical side. For the king has every advantage

12 And I turned myself to behold wisdom, and madness
and folly: for what *can* the man *do* that cometh [1] after the
13 king? *even* that which hath been already done. Then I

[1] Or, *after the king, even him whom they made king long ago?* Or, *after the king, in those things which have been already done?*

in testing them (*v.* 12). Wisdom is more profitable (*v.* 13). The wise can see, but not so the fool (*v.* 14 *a*). Yet one "chance" is to them alike (*v.* 14 *b*). Why then be wise (*v.* 15)? For both alike are forgotten (*v.* 16). So I hated life (*v.* 17).

And I turned myself] *v.* 11, note.

madness] i. 17, note.

for] If *I* fail who can succeed?

for what can *the man* do *that cometh after the king*? even *that which hath been already done*] So also A.V.

The words are very obscure, but this translation is on the whole the best. It will be observed that the words "can...do" are not in the original. Hence we can translate, "What sort of man will he be that cometh after the king?" This is probably the meaning of the LXX, *τίς ἄνθρωπος ὃς ἐπελεύσεται*. Many see here an allusion to Rehoboam; cf. *vv.* 18 *sq.*; Ecclus. xlvii. 23: "en face de Salomon, type du sage, l'auteur évoque le souvenir de Roboam, type du sot" (Pod.). But then it is more difficult than ever to give a satisfactory explanation of the next clause. Hence some (Haupt., Pod.) emend *after* (*'acharêy*) to "after me" (*'acharay*, *v.* 18)—Qoh.-Solomon. In this case "the king" is joined to the following words, translating (see below), "after me, the king whom they have already appointed."

even *that which hath been already done*] Literally, "...which they have already done" (*'āsūhū*). This forms the answer to "what can a man do," etc.?—only that which men have done before. A various reading in some MSS., and Vulg., Pesh. is "what he hath done" (*'āsāhū*). This refers naturally to what the king, i.e. Solomon did (McNeile, Barton). But Vulg. translates, *quid est, inquam, homo, ut sequi possit regem Factorem suum*, referring to God. This may be regarded as a pretty application on homiletical lines, but it may possibly point to a slightly different reading (*'ōsēhū*). Pesh. seems to have known this interpretation, for it says, "Who is the man who shall come after the king in judgement? so with Him who made him." Perhaps also Symm. implies this. Other translations of the verse worth mentioning are: "What will be the man who will come after the king who has long since been appointed?" (Del.). "What will the man do who will come after the king? What his action (*'asōhū*, cf. Ex. xviii. 18) has a long time been" (Hitzig, Euringer). "What will the man be who will come after the king (i.e. Rehoboam) *compared with* him whom they have long since chosen" (Ewald). Siegfried translates like

saw that wisdom excelleth folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. The wise man's eyes are in his head, and the 14
fool walketh in darkness: and yet I perceived that one event happeneth to them all. Then said I in my heart, 15

the R.V. but transposes the two halves of the verse, making *v.* 12 *b* form a reason for the statement in *v.* 11, and this is very attractive. But is there another example in this book of a conclusion like *v.* 11 being followed by a reason for it? Further, many critics omit "already" with LXX (?), Vulg., Pesh. Podechard by several emendations makes the last clause read, "and what shall be the work which he shall do?"

13. *Then I saw*] Again the "I" is emphatic; I the doubter and explorer. For I have taken nothing on credit, I have myself investigated the matter.

that wisdom excelleth folly] Literally, "that wisdom has a superiority ('profit,' i. 3) over folly."

as far as light excelleth darkness] Literally, "like the superiority ('profit') of light over darkness."

The substance of the comparison is common. Judgement, righteousness, God's word, and the Law, are compared to light (Isa. li. 4; Ps. xxxvii. 6, cxix. 105; Prov. vi. 23); the way of the wicked, and ignorance, are compared to darkness (*v.* 14; Prov. iv. 19; Job xxxvii. 19). For in fact Light comprises all life and goodness, of which Darkness is the negation. So the evangelist can say, in a passage which recalls the ideal of wisdom as set forth in Prov. viii., "The light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not" (John i. 5).

14. Hence the wise can see what is in front of him, not so the fool. This is the case although I myself recognise that good and ill fortune come alike to both. The verdict of Qoh. so far is that wisdom is in fact better than folly, whatever may be the chances that come irrespective of human goodness or the reverse.

The wise man's eyes are in his head] cf. Prov. xvii. 24 *a*, and, in a still higher sense, Eph. i. 18.

and the fool walketh in darkness] Prov. xvii. 24 *b* also suggests the failure of a fool's "walk," though the metaphor is slightly different.

and yet I perceived] The Heb. lays stress on the pronoun—I who have just praised wisdom cannot help acknowledging that, etc.

one event happeneth] Better, "one chance chanceth," the substantive and the verb being of the same root. So also in *v.* 15, iii. 19, ix. 2 *sq.* See too Ruth ii. 3; 1 Sam. vi. 9, xx. 26. The nature of the "chance" is defined in *v.* 16, viz. to die and to pass out of the memory of man.

15. So I thought in myself that as the fool and I meet with the same mischance there was no use in my being wiser than

As it happeneth to the fool, so will it happen even to me;
and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart,
16 that this also was vanity. For of the wise man, even as

others, and I determined that to follow wisdom with so poor a result is vanity.

and why was I then more wise?] In these words both *then* and *more* present difficulties.

then] In that condition of things (Jer. xxii. 15). It is omitted by some MSS. with LXX (B ℵ*, not A ℵ^{ca}), Vulg., Pesh. probably through its similarity in Hebrew (*'āz*) to the preceding *I* (*'ani*).

more (*yôthēr*)] It is of the same root as *yithrôn* "profit," *v.* 11, and may be a substantive (vi. 8, 11, vii. 11) or an adverbial expression (vii. 16, and probably xii. 9, 12). It means here "wise in excess," probably in comparison with others, though the comparative is not expressed as it is in Esth. vi. 6.

Winckler, followed by Siegfried and Dr. (in Kittel's Bible), proposed that of the three words *'ᵃni 'āz yôthēr*, the first should go only with the preceding verb and be read *'āni*, and the other two be emended to *'āz tarti*, "Then I searched" (*v.* 3). The conjecture is not happy, for besides the lack of external evidence for a variation in *yôthēr*, "search" was used in *v.* 3 of exploration leading to a fresh subject of enquiry, which is not the case here.

The LXX, besides omitting *then*, and also the next paraphrastic *Then*, joins the *more* to the next clause (also the additional *I* in Swete's edition) thus, καὶ ἵνα τί ἐσοφισάμην; ἐγὼ περισσὸν ἐλάλησα κ.τ.λ. It doubtless had a Heb. text in which the conjunction before *I said* was omitted.

this] Namely, to be wise in excess of others. To interpret it as meaning, "this parity of ill-chance both to wise and to fool" (Targ., Del.) is to credit Qoh. with stating an obvious truth. The LXX adds (at the end of the verse, Vatican, but after *in my heart*, Alex.) διότι ὁ ἄφρων ἐκ περισσεύματος λαλεῖ, which is doubtless derived from Matt. xii. 34 ‖ Lk. vi. 45; cf. also ch. x. 14. It may have been added to show that the utterance *this also was vanity* was in reality foolish rather than wise.

It is interesting to notice that the Targ. also thought that something should be said to soften the unorthodoxy, so adds, "and it is nought save the decree of the word (*memra*) of the LORD," i.e. we can give no explanation of it save that it is the will of God.

16. Wise and fool are alike forgotten. The verse stands in a verbal contradiction to Ps. cxii. 6; Prov. x. 7, but there is no need to suppose (Pod.) that this was intentional on the part of Qoh. His statement is undeniably true as a whole, however true it also is that within narrow circles the righteous are better remembered than the ungodly.

of the fool, there is no remembrance for ever; seeing that in the days to come all will have been already forgotten. And how doth the wise man die even as the fool! So 17
I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun was grievous unto me: for all is vanity and a striving after wind.

And I hated all my labour wherein I laboured under 18

even as of the fool] Literally, "together with (*'im*) the fool." See i. 11, note; also vii. 11; Job ix. 26; xxxvii. 18.

there is no remembrance for ever] See ix. 5.

seeing that . . . already] All one word in the original (*bshekkbar*).

in the days to come] Any days still future. It cannot refer to the Messianic days (Isa. xxvii. 6), for Qoh. shows no interest in eschatological questions, and there is no reason to think he is here tilting against the fantastic promises of apocalyptists (cf. Pod.).

already] i. 10, note. Qoh. speaks as from the future.

And how doth the wise man die even as the fool!] The R.V. appears to understand the "how" like that of the taunting Qinah in Isa. xiv. 4; Ezek. xxvi. 17 (see McNeile). But there can be no taunt here. It is preferable (with Levy) to see in it the sad complaint of dissatisfaction (Judg. xvi. 15; Job xxi. 34); "and how can," etc.

even as] This expression too is literally "together with" (*'im*). See above. It can hardly begin an answer to the preceding question, as in the A.V., "And how dieth the wise *man*? as the fool."

17. The more he thinks over existence the worse it seems to him. He now even says that he hates life, for everything done seems grievous to him. If death, and oblivion by others, are the common lot, life is only a waste. Contrast the cheery optimism of Ps. xxxiv. 12 (1 Pet. iii. 10), in the fulfilment of social duties from a religious motive. But the strength of that Psalmist lay in practical religion, not in academic philosophy.

I hated] The verb is found in Eccles. only in *v.* 18, iii. 8.

was grievous unto me] The preposition is literally "upon" (*'al*), and hence some have explained the clause as "lying like a weight upon me." But *'al* is often used in quite a general sense of the feelings and emotions, e.g. of good pleasure (Esth. i. 19), of sweetness (Ps. civ. 34; Ezek. xvi. 37), of "goodliness" (Ps. xvi. 6).

18—21. A Fool may be Heir!

What use in toiling, when a wise man's heir may be a fool (*vv.* 18—20), or at least he may not have done anything to deserve the share (*v.* 21).

18. Yet although man passes away his work remains. Yes, but I see another reason for my "hatred." I hate my past toil and its

the sun: seeing that I must leave it unto the man that
19 shall be after me. And who knoweth whether he shall
be a wise man or a fool? yet shall he have rule over all
my labour wherein I have laboured, and wherein I have
20 shewed wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. There-
fore I turned about to cause my heart to despair con-

material effect, for I have to leave it to someone—and (*v.* 19) who knows, etc.?

Del. observes rightly "The fiction [of Solomon, etc.] betrays itself by the expressions used. 'The king,' who would not thus express himself indefinitely and unsympathetically regarding his son and successor on the throne, is stripped of his historical individuality."

seeing that I must leave it unto] The sting lies not in his leaving it behind (*v.* 8, note), but in leaving it behind for his successor, who may play the fool with it. For the verb and construction see Ps. xvii. 14.

that shall be after me] i.e. my successor. It does not hint that he shall be born after Qoheleth's death.

19. The reason for his "hatred" is stated. It is impossible to say whether his successor will be wise or a fool—and he will have absolute power over all in which Qoheleth has toiled and in which he has exercised wisdom. Once more comes the refrain at the close of a subject, "This too is vanity," cf. Ps. xxxix. 6, xlix. 10, 17; Lk. xii. 20.

who knoweth] The same question recurs in iii. 21, vi. 12; of unknown or doubtful things. The words recur in viii. 1 with a different *nuance*.

yet shall he have rule (*wyishlaṭ*)] Literally, "And he will have rule." The Heb. word suggests complete mastery, v. 19, vi. 2, viii. 9; Neh. v. 15; Esth. ix. 1 *bis*; Ps. cxix, 133 †. From these reff. it will be clear that it is found only in late writings. It appears indeed to be an Aramaism. See Ezra iv. 20, vii. 24, Dan. ii. 10 and often. Substantives formed from the same root occur in viii. 4, 8 *bis*, vii. 19, x. 5.

under the sun] i. 3, note.

20. Qoh.'s hatred of leaving his gain to a man whom he knows not becomes despondency in general.

I turned about (*sabbôthî*)] For the verb, see i. 6, vii. 25. It refers properly to the actual turning of the body, while the verb translated "turned myself" in *v.* 12 (*pānîthî*) is primarily to turn the face or look (cf. *v.* 11, note).

to cause my heart to despair (*lya'ēsh 'eth libbi*)] The causative form of the verb occurs here only in Heb., but the reflexive or passive form in 1 Sam. xxvii. 1 *al.* So we find the reflexive (Hithpael) use in the Mishna, "give up hope." Compare the Talmudic substantive *yē'ūsh*, resignation of a thing.

cerning all the labour wherein I had laboured under the sun. For there is a man whose labour is with wisdom, 21
and with knowledge, and with [1]skilfulness; yet to a man
that hath not laboured therein shall he [2]leave it for his
portion. This also is vanity and a great evil. For what 22
hath a man of all his labour, and of the [3]striving of his heart,
wherein he laboureth under the sun? For all his days are 23

[1] Or, *success* [2] Heb. *give.* [3] Or, *vexation*

concerning] This is a better rendering of the wide reference of the preposition (*'al*) than "of" (A.V.).

21. In any case, even if the successor be wise, he will have done nothing for his inheritance. Suppose one who is a wise, intelligent, and competent man yet he will have to leave his property to another as his portion, who has never toiled for it. This too is vanity and a great evil.

For there is] Better "For if there be," the verbal substantive (*yêsh*) being used in the same way as in i. 10; Judg. vi. 13.

skilfulness] The word (*kishrôn*), derived from a root meaning "fit," "right," is found only in Eccles. iv. 4, v. 11. It means "aptitude," and in v. 11 apparently "success." The root recurs in x. 10.

shall he leave it for his portion] The margin for *leave* has "Heb. *give*." There is no thought here (contrast *v.* 18) of leaving behind, but only of delivery. The above translation of the clause is right, the first man hands over his gain as the second man's portion. But there is no *for* expressed in the original, and some have therefore wrongly explained "his portion" as epexegetic of "it," i.e. the first man hands over it, namely, his own portion, to the second (cf. Ex. ii. 6 for the Heb. construction).

a great evil] The first time that *evil* (*rā'āh*) occurs in this Book as a substantive (vi. 1 *al.*). Compare i. 13.

22—25. Yet God gives Happiness in the Toil.

Toil and anxiety are continuous (*vv.* 22, 23). But God intends every such worker to find pleasure in the toil itself (*v.* 24), for He is the source of pleasure (*v.* 25).

22, 23. What gain does one get in toil and thought? Anxiety is never absent.

nil sine magno
Vita labore dedit mortalibus. Horace, *Sat.* I. ix. 59 *sq.*

22. *what hath*] Better "what comes to." For the Heb. participle has an inchoative force, Neh. vi. 6 †; cf. Ex. ix. 3.

of all] Not "out of" but "in" or "with" or "at the price of."

striving] i. 17, note, with i. 14, note.

23. *For all his days are* but *sorrows, and his travail is grief; yea, even in the night*, etc.

but sorrows, and his travail is grief; yea, even in the night his heart taketh no rest. This also is vanity.

24 There is nothing better for a man *than* that he should

The Heb. can be translated as above (with most commentators), but (*a*) the contrast between *days* and *night* is not sufficiently brought out; (*b*) the vocalisation of the *and*, to which, in the original, *grief* is affixed, suggests that "and grief" should be joined to the preceding words (though the Heb. scholar may notice Prov. xxv. 3; Isa. lxv. 17). Hence the following is to be preferred, in spite of the accents, "For (during) all his days his occupation is sorrows and vexation; even in the night," etc. (So Aben Ezra, McN.)

sorrows] i. 18, note.

travail] Better, "occupation," i. 13, note.

grief] Better, "vexation," i. 18, note.

his heart taketh no rest] Literally, "lieth not down." For the connotation of "rest," "lying in peace," see Lev. xxvi. 6; Job xi. 18. There does not appear to be any other example of the heart or its synonyms being used in this metaphor.

24. There is nothing better to be found among men than to enjoy life in the midst of one's work. For I have learned this that such happiness is given from the hand of God.

The contradiction to *vv.* 1, 2, 11 is only apparent, not real. Material pleasures cannot, it is true, yield absolute happiness. But *in practice* it is possible to derive much happiness from them, and happiness of this kind and measure is intended by God. It need hardly be said that Qoh. is not thinking of sinful pleasures. "A man must not go about moping (kopfhängerisch), but enjoy the good which God grants him" (Zap.).

There is nothing better...than *that he should eat*] No doubt this translation is right, but it can only be obtained by the addition of a second "m" to the text (*bā'ādām mishevyṓkal* for *bā'ādām shevyṓkal*). This is implied in some Heb. MSS., (ℵ^{ca} C) of the LXX, and Targ., Pesh. So in iii. 22, cf. also iii. 12, viii. 15, and for the sense v. 18, ix. 7, xi. 9. Perhaps iii. 13 caused the omission of the second "m."

The text as it stands is rendered as a question by Vulg. and gives nearly the same sense. *Nonne melius est comedere*, etc.?

The LXX B also attempts to translate the present text, but apparently as a statement, *οὐκ ἔστιν ἀγαθὸν ἀνθρώπῳ ὃ φάγεται κ.τ.λ.*

better] The Heb. language has no comparative forms and "better" can therefore only be expressed by "good than." Thus here the phrase is "There is no good than," and the question arises what is the meaning of the word "good." Is it moral worth (perhaps *v.* 26, vii. 20, xii. 14), *or* pleasure, happiness, with a physical, or at least psychical, connotation (the next clause, *v.* 1, iii. 12 *sq.*, vi. 3, and often)? The latter is right here. For

eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy good in his labour.
This also I saw, that it is from the hand of God. For 25
who can eat, or who can [1]have enjoyment, [2]more than I?

[1] Or, *hasten* thereto

[2] According to some ancient authorities, *apart from him*.

to say that eating and drinking, etc., is the highest moral good would seem to belong to a very much lower stage of religion than any utterance by Qoheleth. See viii. 15.

for a man (*bā'ādām*)] The text naturally means "among men" (2 Sam. xxiii. 3), or perhaps "in the case of a man." But we should have expected *lā'ādām*, "for a man," as in vi. 12, viii. 15.

eat and drink] The words are merely illustrative of the enjoyments of daily life (Jer. xxii. 15).

make his soul enjoy] The causative of "enjoy," *v.* 1. See note there. McN. translates well, "let himself experience pleasure."

This] Namely the fact expressed in the following clause.

I saw] By experience gained, i. 14, note.

that it is from the hand of God] Compare Ecclus. xi. 14 (Heb.), "Good and evil, life and death, poverty and riches—it is (all) from the LORD." For the expression "from the hand of," see especially 1 Chr. xxviii. 19; Isa. li. 17; Jer. xxv. 17.

25. For who can eat or have sensation apart from Him?

have enjoyment (*yāchūsh*)] Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (except possibly Ps. cxli. 1; Job xx. 2) the root *chush* (or *chāshash*, for this would not be excluded) means "hasten." Hence the R.V. marg. "hasten thereto" (A.V. similar). Perhaps our word is from a similar though fundamentally different root occurring here only, but represented in Arab., Aram., Assyr. and Eth. It is fairly common in the Talmud and Aramaic generally, in the sense of feeling pain, or apprehending. But in T.B. *Sabb.* 140 *a*, we find, "I drank one cup of (cooled) wine and I felt (the cold) from the hair of my head to my toe-nails." It appears therefore to include any sensation, e.g. that produced by cooled wine. Perhaps therefore, the πίεται of the LXX (also Theod., Pesh.), is only a paraphrase of the original. It is extremely unlikely that "drink" was written by Qoh. here as well as in the preceding verse, for so rare a word as *yāchūsh* would hardly be substituted for the easy, and dissimilar, *yishteh*.

The reading φείσεται of Aq., Symm., with Jer. (in his commentary, *parcet*), is probably due to their reading *yāchūsh* as *yāchūṣ* (Jer. xxi. 7), for the interchange of "s" and "ṣ" is very common in late Hebrew.

The Targ. paraphrase, "Who is the man that has apprehension (*chashāshā'*) of the great Day of Judgement which is to come?"

more than I? (*chūtz mimmenni*)] An impossible translation. The Hebrew can only mean "except me" or "apart from me," neither

26 For to the man that pleaseth him *God* giveth wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth

of which gives sense here, although the Targum reads "without me" (*bar minni*), and the Vulg. paraphrases *ut ego*. The text of some Heb. MSS. is doubtless right, *chūtz mimmennu*, "apart from Him," and so the LXX *παρὲξ αὐτοῦ* with Pesh., Jer. in comm. The verse then expands the end of the preceding. God alone gives us pleasure in eating and drinking, etc., for none can eat or feel apart from Him.

26. The verse is in two parts.

26 *a* is a parenthesis (perhaps by another hand, the *chāsîd*, Introd. p. xxiv), giving a concrete and morally instructive example of the truth that everything is derived from God (*vv*. 24 *b*, 25). It is He who gives to a good man his wisdom, etc., and to the sinner business, the fruit of which, after all, he will have to give to a good man.

26 *b*. Then, as at the end of subsections ending with *vv*. 19, 21, 23, comes, *This also*, etc. But to what does the vanity, etc., refer? To the main subject of the section, *v*. 24 *a*. It means, Get what happiness you can out of the ordinary acts of life—and it is God's will you should get it, *vv*. 24 *b*, 25—yet ultimately there is nothing in it, and no satisfaction will be found in it. For the use of "vanity" in this connexion, cf. xi. 8, 10, and also ix. 9.

McN. (p. 61) thinks that *v*. 26 *b* is a meaningless gloss, but we must credit even a glossator with some reason for his addition, and the meaning here does not seem to be far to seek.

For to the man that pleaseth him] Lit. "to a man that is good in His sight." The R.V. may be retained so long as it is understood that moral pleasing or goodness is intended. There is no thought of God making an arbitrary choice independent of the man's moral qualities.

God *giveth wisdom, and knowledge, and joy*] The thought is "to him that hath shall be given." A common law of Nature is so far stated. There is here no question of Divine justice, or God's temporal retribution, as such. Hence, whatever be the source of the words, they are not of necessity in contradiction to Qoheleth's belief. See below.

but to the sinner, etc.] So vii. 26, viii. 12, ix. 2, 18, Eccles. †. Here too by *the sinner* must be understood one who fails morally, not primarily intellectually, as though *sinner* were synonymous with "fool" (Levy), and not an ordinary person who only differs from the *good* because he has not been selected by God for special mercies.

This latter thought is found in Ecclus. xxxviii. 25—34, though even there in less strong a form than the later idea of the *'am ha'āretz* ("This multitude which knoweth not the Law are cursed," John vii. 49) as contrasted with the scholars of the wise.

travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that pleaseth God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

Here the man who definitely neglects God is given worldly tasks. So far, again, there is no clear expression of Divine retribution as such. This is the experience of life.

travail] "(as) a business," *v.* 23, i. 13, note.

to gather and to heap up] The result of the second verb is that the grain is stored away safe. And so Symmachus, *ἀθροΐσαι καὶ ἀπόθεσθαι*. See Ps. xxxiii. 7, where for the LXX *τιθεὶς ἐν θησαυροῖς ἀβύσσους* Symm. has *ἀπέθετο* (Field, Appendix).

that he may give to him that pleaseth God] See note above. Qoh. means that all that the sinner stows away so carefully he will have to give to the good. Here is some expression of the truth of retribution, but it is hardly more than a statement of what is often seen. Compare Matt. xiii. 12.

This also is vanity and a striving after wind] On the whole sentence see the note at the beginning of the verse. For the last phrase see i. 14, note. Its addition to the more common "This also is vanity" perhaps marks the end of a longer section; in this case, *vv.* 18—26. So at least in *vv.* 11, 17.

The emphasis laid in *vv.* 24 *b*—26 *a* on the fact that God is the Disposer of all things leads to the subject of iii. 1—15.

Additional Note on *v.* 8.

concubines very many (*shiddah wshiddôth*)] That the phrase is epexegetic of "the delights of the sons of men," and that it fills up the picture of the luxury of an Eastern potentate in the only possible way by the mention of the harem, is acknowledged by every one to-day. But how the words, or rather the one word, for the second is but the plural of the first, come to mean this is quite unknown. For *shiddah* occurs here only in the Bible, and has not this meaning in the few places in which it seems to occur in later Jewish books.

Of the innumerable explanations the following are the least unlikely:

(1) From the root *shādad*, "to deal violently with," (*a*) a female captive (Aben Ezra); (*b*) she who rules, a mistress, lady; cf. Arab. *sitti*, "my lady" (Del.); (*c*) one shut up, i.e. in a harem (Knobel).

(2) From the Assyrian root *šadadu* = love (Friedr. Delitzsch, Wright, König).

(3) From *shêd* in Hebrew = a demon. Hence in Babylon our two words were interpreted "a demon and a demoness" (T.B. *Gittin*, 68 *a*). Similarly the *Pesiqta Rabbathi* (§ 15, p. 69 *a*, Friedmann), explains them homiletically by "demons and demonesses."

3 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every

(4) *Shiddah* is said by Rashi to mean "a lady's chariot," "a palanquin" in the Talmud, but this appears to be a mistake, the word meaning only a chest, or perhaps a chest on wheels.

(5) Levy, finding that *shidda'* in the Targums means "side," boldly transfers to our word the usage of *yerek*, "loins" (Gen. xxiv. 2), and thus makes it parallel to Judg. v. 30, where *racham* (presumably "womb," *rechem*) means "damsel," as in the stelé of Mesha, l. 17.

(6) Euringer, followed by Dr. (in Kittel), and Friedr. Del., emends to *sârah wsârôth*, "princess and princesses."

(7) The old versions are on quite different lines, deriving the words from the Aramaic root *sh'da'*, to pour out:

(*a*) The persons who pour out wine, "a butler and female cupbearers," οἰνοχόον καὶ οἰνοχόας, LXX, Theod.

(*b*) The instruments, "a cup and cups," κυλίκιον καὶ κυλίκια (Aq.). Similarly Vulg. *scyphos et urceos in ministerio ad vina fundenda*. The Targ. having explained "delights" as baths renders our words by "spouts for tepid and for hot water."

(*c*) Kimchi in his Lexicon prefers the explanation, "instruments of music," and quotes the Geonim as interpreting it, "a stringed instrument for music (*kli Inigôn hamûziga*), which existed when the Temple was still standing." This presumably was the basis of Luther's *allerlei Saitenspiel*, and of the A.V. "as musical instruments, and that of all sorts." The *Codex Venetus* of the Greek is σύστημα καὶ συστήματα, i.e. apparently, "musical concords," and there is said to be a similar Arabic word meaning "to sing."

In any case the construction of the idiom, "a woman, women," is the same as in Judg. v. 30, "a damsel, two damsels."

Ch. III. 1—8. Everything has its Time.

The passage is closely connected with ii. 24—26. Its primary intention is, Take each part of life as it comes, and do your best with it, for God permits it. Yet there is the secondary thought, the web into which the woof is wrought, the underlying consciousness that all is going on *ohne Hast, ohne Rast*, determined from on high, and that man is powerless and his desires can never be satisfied.

Marcus Aurelius gives us (*Meditations*, iv. 32) a list of occupations and interests, by which he illustrates the sameness of his own time and of sixty years earlier. But it is a list such as any ordinary person might draw up, and has neither the comprehensiveness nor the poetry of Qoheleth's.

1. *To every thing*] The Heb. is more comprehensive "To the totality"—everything is included in the sum total. No doubt the neuter sense is intended, but the Targum renders, "To every man comes a time," which paraphrases the thought of the context not unfairly.

[1]purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time 2
to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which
is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to 3
break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and 4

[1] Or, *matter*

there is a season] It has a fixed time. There is no immediate reference to the brevity of its existence.

a season (*zmān*)] So Neh. ii. 6; Esth. ix. 27, 31, and in the Aram. of Ezra v. 3 and Daniel † often. It seems to refer more to a fixed and definite period than does the following *time* (*'ēth*), which is the most general word that can be used. If so the order will be that of Wisdom viii. 8, ἐκβάσεις καιρῶν καὶ χρόνων ("the issues of seasons and times").

to every purpose (*chēphets*)] In Eccles. *v.* 17, v. 4, 8, viii. 6, xii. 1, 10 †. Here it means that which occupies a man's desire and aim, i.e. his business, concern, interest. And so *v.* 17, v. 8, viii. 6. Compare perhaps Isa. liii. 10, lviii. 13; Prov. xxxi. 13. And so often in New-Hebrew.

2. The list starts with the beginning and close of human life, and as parallel to it a form of human activity which shows command over the life and death of individuals in the vegetable world.

a time to be born] Literally, "to bear." The author avoids the passive form of the verb (vii. 1) partly for euphony, but chiefly because he desires to use the same transitive form as in all his other examples, *vv.* 2—8. The transitive suggests the simple action of the verb and may be rendered in Eng. by an abstract substantive (Jer. xxv. 34, "your slaughter"), or perhaps here by the passive "to be born." But it is preferable to retain the usual transitive sense "to bear," which indeed throws back the origin of life somewhat further.

a time to die] The Targ. renders this "to kill" from a desire to make the phrase strictly parallel to the preceding. But Qoh. cares little about parallelism.

that which is planted] So evidently superfluous that it can hardly have been added.

3. Destruction and construction, in human life and in buildings.

to kill (*lahᵃrōg*)] No other meaning is possible, though Aben Ezra, followed by some others, translates "to wound." Levy for the sake of the second half of the verse would read *lahᵃros* ("to pull down"), and translate the word for "heal" by "repair" as in 1 K. xviii. 30, cf. Ps. lx. 2. The copyist misunderstood the second word, and therefore altered the first. This is ingenious, and attractive, but lacks any external support.

to heal] After all, to restore to health is not a bad antithesis to killing; cf. Lk. vi. 9.

to break down] Quite generally, "to destroy a building." But

a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
5 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones
together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from

this is commoner in the East than with us, for ruins however venerable are regarded there only as quarries for new buildings.

4. Emotions; weeping and laughing, lamenting and dancing. Qoh. in the second pair has in mind especially death and marriage.

to mourn] A technical word (*ṣphōd*) to express the loud lamentations and frenzied actions of Eastern mourners; cf. xii. 5.

to dance] An important part of the marriage procession, and the marriage ceremonies in general. Pesh. enjoys the unique privilege of being able to employ the same consonants for both verbs, to mourn (the Aphel voice), and to dance (the Pael).

5. From the dance of the wedding-feast Qoheleth turns to marriage and its duties.

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together] The verse is obscure. Observe that *away* is only part of the English interpretation. It is not necessarily in the Hebrew. The following explanations have been given:

(1) To scatter stones in pulling down a ruin, and to gather them up for a new building. This is tautology after *v.* 3.

(2) To cast stones on an enemy's land (2 K. iii. 19, 25). Against this (as indeed also against the preceding explanation) is the fact that each verse in this enumeration is complete in itself, with its two halves corresponding to each other. The second half would, with this explanation, have no connexion with the first.

It may however reasonably be suspected that there is something underlying the idea of casting stones, that, in fact, the action as such either has a mystical significance, or is a metaphor.

(3) If it is mystical, it may represent the expulsion of evil. So at Mecca stones are thrown on a cairn by every pilgrim on the day of sacrifice and the three following days, with the idea, as it seems, of getting rid of personal pollution (see J. G. Frazer, *The Scapegoat*, 1913, p. 24). But there is no recognition of this in the context.

(4) If it is a metaphor, the meaning may be that suggested in the Midrash, *Eccles. R.* on this verse, "A time to cast stones—when thy wife is ceremonially clean; and a time to gather stones—when thy wife is unclean," i.e. the reference is to the marriage act. Levy (Appendix, pp. 144—152) collects evidence for this metaphor from modern folk-lore, and recalls the myth of Deucalion and Pyrrha in Ovid, *Metamorph.* i. 381—413. On the whole, this explanation is to be preferred.

to refrain] "To abstain" is better. It is literally "to keep far" (Ex. xxiii. 7).

from embracing] For example, "during the seven days of mourning," Targum, but hardly then only.

embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to 6
keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time 7
to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a 8
time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a

6. Qoh. now speaks of business. Sometimes it is well to seek to acquire new stores, sometimes to destroy what one has. Sometimes to guard, sometimes to cast away. The Targ. renders the second half, "A time fit for keeping merchandise, and a time for throwing merchandise into the sea, in the time of a great gale."

to lose] Hardly, for the verb is in the intensive (Piel) voice. It may mean "to pronounce lost" (Levy), which would give good sense after a search is hopeless, though this verb does not appear to be so used. It probably is "to destroy" (vii. 7, ix. 18), and so even of flocks (Jer. xxiii. 1).

7. As in *v*. 5 Qoh. enlarged on the subject of marriage, suggested in *v*. 4, so here on that of mourning mentioned in the same verse. There is a time when one should show the outward signs of mourning, rending garments and sitting in silence, and a time when the garment should be mended and the tongue resume its office.

to rend] Garments were rent on receiving bad news (Gen. xxxvii. 29; 2 Chr. xxiii. 13), especially news of death (Gen. xxxvii. 34; 2 Sam. i. 11; Job i. 20), and by friends mourning in sympathy (Job ii. 12). Rashi, in accordance with his interpretation of each of these verses as God's acts, explains the word as meaning to divide the kingdom (1 K. xi. 30, xiv. 8). So also Plumptre, perhaps independently. But the practice of rending was so common that it would require a clear indication of that special application, such as Ahijah actually made.

to sew] When the time of mourning is over.

to be silent] As was Aaron at the death of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. x. 3).

to speak] The reference is quite general, but joy naturally expresses itself in words (Ps. cxxvi. 2). The *Metzûdôth David* explains this half of the verse of silence under reproach, and of replying. In itself this is good, and serves as a transition to *v*. 8.

8. A fine ending to the list, with inverted parallelism. It comprises the individual and the nation, the reference to the former predominating in the first, and to the latter in the second half. Observe the change to two substantives, *war* and *peace*. Probably the latter was chosen to end the sentence for its sonorous form (*shâlôm*), and it carried the former with it.

9—15. Having finished his list of human forms of activity, none of which have permanence, yet all of which are to be expected, or ought to be used, in their proper time, Qoh. turns back to his great subject—there is no real satisfaction to be found in anything one does (*v*. 9), though the business be given him of God (*v*. 10). The reason is that something in a man's heart is

9 time for peace. What profit hath he that worketh in
10 that wherein he laboureth? I have seen the travail which
God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised there-
11 with. He hath made every thing beautiful in its time:
also he hath set [1]the world in their heart, yet so that

[1] Or, *eternity*

always urging him on to more knowledge than he can grasp (*v.* 11). Therefore let him enjoy himself in his toil (*vv.* 12, 13). The very completeness and perfection of God's work produces dread of Him (*vv.* 14, 15); cf. vi. 10—12.

9. *What profit*, etc.] The verse is a shortened form of i. 3; see notes there.

10. Almost identical with the end of i. 13 (where see notes), but here Qoh. (1) more summarily states that his verdict is due to experience (*I have seen*, i. 14, note), (2) does not describe his occupation as "sore," or, rather, "evil."

11. Although the whole of Nature is not only good (Gen. i. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31) but beautiful, when each part is taken and used in its proper time—yet for man there is more. He has in his conscious personality a craving which never ceases, yet has it in such a manner that he can never find out the complete work of God from beginning to end.

every thing] Literally, "the all," *v.* 2, note; xi. 5.

beautiful] In v. 18 (17) it seems to be a further definition of "good." Everything was made "good," but it is also beautiful, satisfying in itself the aesthetic taste of the mind and consciousness, in its own right time. The meaning "fitting" or "appropriate" is not necessary here, though it is common in New-Heb., and indeed is found in the present Heb. text of Ecclus. xiv. 16, xxxii. 6. But the genuineness of these additions to the ordinary text of Ecclus. is very doubtful.

in its time] Symm. καλὸν ἕκαστον ἐν καιρῷ ἰδίῳ. The phrase (*b'ittó*, or with the feminine or plural affix) is used very widely, e.g. of the signs of the zodiac (Job xxxviii. 32), night and day (Jer. xxxiii. 20), rain (Deut. xi. 14), fruit (Ps. i. 3), corn (Hos. ii. 9), a shock of corn (Job v. 26), a word (Prov. xv. 23), the destruction of a city (Isa. xiii. 22), the restoration of Israel (Isa. lx. 22). Compare Ecclus. xxxix. 16 (Hebrew, see also *v.* 33), "The works of God are all of them good, and each need He provideth in its time." The author may have had our passage in mind. The Talmud has a pretty adaptation of this clause when it says that "It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, makes every man's occupation beautiful to him" (T.B. *Berakoth*, 43 *b*).

also] A second point to be remembered. This is better than "though" as in Neh. vi. 1; Ps. xcv. 9 ("and," R.V.).

he hath set] Properly "given." The word never quite loses its connotation of free supply by God's kindness.

man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end. I know that there is 12

the world (marg. "or, *eternity*"), *ha'ôlâm*] The word occurs in i. 4, xii. 5, and in the plural, i. 10, Eccles. †, always, as everywhere else in the Bible, in the sense of "everness," i.e. continuance without other limit than that which intrinsically belongs to the subject under consideration. It is not, properly, "eternity" in contrast to "time," much less does it connote a belief in immortality, but it might be "eternity containing times."

So here the thought is that each of the things mentioned in *vv.* 1—8, and indeed everything included in "the all" of this verse and *v.* 1, are parts of that which continues. They are each beautiful in their own time, and each separately may so far satisfy man. But he has a larger outlook. He craves to know and enjoy the sum, the permanence underlying all and in virtue of which they exist.

It will be seen that this is more than "the world," although it is also easy to understand how *'ôlām* came to mean "world" in post-Biblical Heb. even in Ecclus. iii. 18 (Heb. only).

The meaning of "world" is preferred by A.V., the Jewish-American version, Vulg. (*mundus*), Cheyne, Zap. That of "eternity" in some sense by Del., Plu., Wild., McN., Pod. Many emendations are mentioned by Barton and Pod., but they are all unnecessary.

in their heart] The heart of "the sons of men," *v.* 10. On "heart" see i. 13, note. It is the conscious man, especially his intellect, but not excluding his emotion.

yet so that man cannot] The Hebrew clause contains certainly two negatives, *blî* and *lo'*, and perhaps a third, if the *m* of *mibblî* is privative. But, unlike Eng., the Heb. language allows one negative to intensify another (e.g. Ex. xiv. 11).

The above rendering of the clause (which has no exact parallel) is probably right—"in such a way that a man cannot"—but the versions render, "in order that" (LXX, Vulg., Pesh., Targ.), the sense of which is not merely to state the fact of man's inability, but to make this a part of God's purpose from the first.

find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end] In spite of man's perception of "eternity," and his desire to understand it, the various parts that make up God's work are, in their multitude and their variety, altogether beyond his grasp. Man's delight in each detail, and yet his inability to know the whole (from its beginning to its end), and his consequent failure to be satisfied, are expressed by Qoh. with singular vividness in this verse. Compare vii. 24.

12. Man cannot be satisfied (*v.* 11), so he had best take what comes and enjoy himself.

nothing better for them, than to rejoice, and [1]to do good
13 so long as they live. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy good in all his labour, is the gift

[1] Or, *to get good*

for them] Rather, "(existing) among them," i.e. among men, cf. "their heart," "man" (*v.* 11), and ii. 24, note. The R.V. translates as though the Hebrew had the preposition "l," to which indeed Barton would emend (*lām* for *bām*), unnecessarily. Besides, *lām* never occurs in the Masoretic text of the Old Testament. Another but less probable interpretation refers "among (or rather 'in') them" to the various events of *vv.* 1—8. Man cannot satisfy himself with the whole (for which he craves); let him therefore get what he can out of the separate items. The sense is excellent, but to refer "them" to what is so far back, and is expressed so indefinitely, is rather forced.

than to rejoice, and to do good] This sounds excellent, but though the phrase "do good" has generally elsewhere a moral meaning (vii. 20), yet "good" never has this meaning in the *ultimata* of this book (ii. 24, iii. 22, v. 18, viii. 15, ix. 7, xi. 9). One can hardly dare therefore to attribute it to our phrase here, in spite of the LXX, τοῦ ποιεῖν ἀγαθόν, the Vulg., *facere bene*, Pesh. and Targ. The phrase is the converse of 2 Sam. xii. 18, "vex himself" (R.V.), lit. "do ill." Here it will mean "do well," "enjoy himself." See further, Introd. p. xxxi.

so long as they live] The A.V. gives the literal translation "in his life." If as is probable *them* (*supra*) refers to men, the pronoun here individualises. If to the events of *vv.* 1—8, the reference is to the man who rejoices, etc.

13. And all such happiness comes as God's gift. v. 18 is little more than an enlargement of this.

And also] The author states a second fact which he knows (*v.* 12). Possibly it should be understood in an adversative sense. "But also" (Del.), for the man may forget this.

every man (*Kol hā'ādām*)] v. 19. vii. 2, xii. 13, Eccles. †. Although the normal grammatical meaning of the phrase should be "the whole of man" or "of men" (Gen. vii. 21), Qoh. uses it here in the sense of "every one of mankind." So also in v. 19, vii. 2; and perhaps xii. 13. This usage approximates to that of the Mishna, where *kol* is used more widely than in Biblical Heb. See also *v.* 17, "every work." For a similar Heb. construction, see Gen. xx. 13.

enjoy good] ii. 1, note.

the gift of God] v. 19; cf. ii. 24 and especially Ecclus. xi. 17, (where however the Heb. is half obliterated).

14. Qoh. knows that it is best to enjoy the details of life and that such enjoyment is the gift of God (*vv.* 12, 13). He here says

of God. I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be 14
for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken
from it: and God hath done it, that men should fear
before him. [1]That which is hath been already; and that 15

[1] Or, *That which hath been is now*

that he also knows the permanence of each work of God and its perfection, and that God has caused men to fear Him.

doeth] Not "hath done" (LXX, ἐποίησεν and so Vulg., Pesh.). For Qoh. is not thinking of the Creation only, but of everything God ever does. So the Targum.

it shall be for ever] Not, of course, that any one of the states or events mentioned in *vv.* 1—8 continues for ever, e.g. war or peace, but that each obeys certain laws and is in being or not as the case demands.

nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it] So Ecclus. xviii. 6, xlii. 21. See Introd. p. xxvii.

and God hath done it, that men should fear before him] The A.V. is more careful in writing *it* and *men* in italics. Now each thing is regarded as completed, hence God *hath done*. The sentence as translated above expresses the object God has in view. But it is equally possible to translate the Hebrew, "God caused men to fear," cf. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. See also Apoc. xiii. 15. In this case not the object but the effect of God's action is stated.

The result is the same, that men *fear before him*. The expression suggests more terror than does "fear him." The contemplation of the fixed character of God's laws of action, and their ultimate perfection, beyond the power of man to improve or alter, produces a sensation of fear. If they are such, what must He be who made them?

15. What was stated of man in i. 9 is here stated of God. His works are permanent and complete (*v.* 14), and of an unending sameness.

Observe that (1) this does not necessarily imply a belief in the doctrine of cycles (Introd. p. xxxi); (2) and is not necessarily pessimistic. On the contrary the sameness of God's actions is a source of strength to the believer. Qoh. means that the absence of arbitrary change in God's methods of working supplies a basis for that enjoyment of life's details which He so freely gives.

That which is hath been already] The A.V. and the R.V. marg. give, "That which hath been is now," but *hbâr* (i. 10) seems never to mean *now* in Biblical or later Heb., and is translated *already* in the next clause without a variant. On the other hand the rendering *is* is rather forced for *hāyāh*. Probably a third translation is better, "That which hath been was already" (in some earlier period).

which is to be hath already been: and God seeketh again
that which is [1]passed away.
16 And moreover I saw under the sun, in the place of
judgement, that wickedness was there; and in the place of
17 righteousness, that wickedness was there. I said in mine

[1] Heb. *driven away*.

and God seeketh again that which is passed away (*ybaqqēsh 'eth nirdāph*)] The margin rightly says, "Heb. *driven away*." The meaning is uncertain, because apart from the context the words would mean a person driven away, who is sought by God with a view to his restoration. This is actually the interpretation of the LXX, ζητήσει τὸν διωκόμενον, Pesh., Targ. ("God will require the benighted and the poor from the hands of the wicked who pursues him"), and even Symm., though he gives a slightly different turn to the thought (ἐπιζητήσει, or ἐκζητήσει, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκδιωκομένων). So also, as it appears (notwithstanding Levy's forced exposition on p. 28) Ecclus. v. 3 (Heb.), "Say not, who can prevail against His (*or* my) strength, for the LORD seeketh such as are driven away." See Introd. p. xxvi.

Yet in this context this translation is meaningless. Hence the Vulg., *et Deus instaurat quod abiit*, and most modern scholars. The participle "driven away" is explained as referring to a thing that has in the flux of time been sent off, or as we say has *passed away*. And this is to be accepted though there is no parallel to the use of the verb.

Heb. scholars will notice an *'eth* with an undefined object. It was probably inserted solely with the aim of distinguishing the object from the subject of the clause (cf. G.-K. § 117 *c*.). Otherwise a ready translation would be "one driven away, an exile, will seek God." See also vii. 7 for a similar insertion of an *'eth*.

16, 17. There is much injustice done on earth, yet God will at last judge all men.

16. Men suffer from the lack of justice and of righteousness in those placed in authority.

And moreover] A second point, the first being introduced by *v*. 10.

in the place of judgement] The A.V. omits *in*, making *the place of judgement* the direct object of *I saw*. This is both simpler than the R.V., which takes it as an accusative of place, and more vivid, "I saw the place of judgement—there (sat) wickedness."

judgement] The verdict of the judge.

righteousness] The quality that moves him to give a right judgement, or perhaps *the place of righteousness* is not that of the judge, but of the ruler in general. The context does not suggest that leaders of religion are intended, as Barton seems to say.

wickedness . . . wickedness] The repetition emphasises, cf. iv. 2. But the second *wickedness* is almost intolerable, and we may

heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every [1]purpose and for every work. [2]I said in mine heart, *It is* because of the sons of 18

[1] Or, *matter*

[2] Or, *I said in mine heart concerning the sons of men,* It is *that God &c.*

accept the emendation of "transgression" (*pāsha'* for *rāsha'*) suggested by Grätz and followed by Zap., Driver (in Kittel) and Barton.

17. But God will judge the righteous and the wicked. For each concern has its own time, and there is a judgement about the whole of each man's work.

I said in mine heart] ii. 1.

God shall judge the righteous and the wicked] McN. (p. 25) thinks this statement inconsistent with Qoh.'s own sayings in *vv.* 16, 18, that wickedness is allowed by God to be prevalent, in order that He may show men that they are beasts. McN. therefore attributes the whole verse to the *Chāsîd*. And indeed although the existence of the *Chāsîd* as a separate person is more than doubtful, it is probable that the verse is no part of the original words of Qoh. See Introd. p. xxv.

for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work] The Heb. is certainly corrupt, and the best emendation gives "for there is a time for every purpose (or 'concern,' *v.* 1, note), and a judgement about all the work." See the Note at the end of this chapter.

every work] The phrase is unique in Hebrew (*kol ha-ma'aseh*), and is of the same form as that of "every man" in *v.* 13, where see note. Here however the normal translation "all the work" gives good sense.

18—22. God desires to show men their insignificance (*v.* 18). For man and beast are alike in the shortness of their existence (*vv.* 19, 20). And one cannot even tell for certain whether after death man has any superiority over the beast (*v.* 21). Therefore enjoy life while it is possible to do so, for after death there is no coming back to earth (*v.* 22).

18. A second point, after the first in *v.* 17, connected only loosely with *v.* 16. God proves men, and shows them they are but cattle. He not only will judge; He will also convince men of their worthlessness. Cf. Ps. lxxiii. 22.

It is *because of* (*'al dibrath*)] The Heb. phrase in vii. 14 and perhaps in viii. 2 † means "for the sake of," "because of," which is only a slight extension of the meaning of the common phrase *'al dbar*, "with reference to," cf. *'al dibrathi* "after the manner of," Ps. cx. 4 †. Here it is doubtful which of the two meanings must be accepted.

men, that God may prove them, and that they may see
19 that they themselves are *but as* beasts. For [1]that which

[1] Or, *the sons of men are a chance, and the beasts are a chance, and one &c.*

(1) *because of.* R.V., Jewish-American Version, Del., McN., Barton. The question then arises, *What* is *because of?* (*a*) The answer can hardly lie in *v.* 17, God's judgement and the limit of human actions. For this supplies no sufficient reason for the statement of our verse. (*b*) It therefore refers to *v.* 16, the prevalence of injustice, which the writer here says is permitted for the sake of men whom God will prove, etc. McN. and Barton accept this the more readily as they rightly consider *v.* 17 to be an addition to Qoheleth's own words.

(2) "With reference to," or, as the R.V. marg., "concerning." In this case the phrase is closely connected with *I said in mine heart*, and no question of connexion with *v.* 17 or *v.* 16 arises. On the whole this is both simpler and preferable. So Vulg., *de.* The A.V. "concerning the estate of" gives a different meaning to *dibrath* which is quite unjustifiable.

that God may prove them] Better simply, God is for proving them. For this use of the Heb. infinitive see 2 Sam. xiv. 25; Isa. xxi. 1, etc. (G.-K., § 114 *o*).

prove (*lbârām*)] In Eccles. ix. 1 †, where the text is doubtful. The root meaning seems to be to separate and so bring out clearly. The A.V. margin, "that they might clear God" is interesting, expresses the commoner subjective meaning of the verbal affix (lit. "their clearing"), and also suits the ordinary text of the next words, but it introduces a thought that seems to be quite strange to the context, though not perhaps to vii. 14 (see note "after him").

and that they may see] A slight alteration of the Heb., giving "and for showing," is generally accepted.

that they themselves are but as *beasts*] The Heb. is very curious in its alliteration (*shhêm bhêmāh hêmmāh lāhem*), and almost unintelligible. Literally perhaps it is "that they are beasts, they for them," i.e. taking *lāhem* reflexively, *they themselves.*

Probably the author intended *lāhem* to be the "dative" after *show*, in accordance with the construction which is very common in New-Heb., though unknown in the Bible. The word however is far from the verb. We do not know the length of the lines in the MSS., but if in an early MS. the *lāhem* of *v.* 19 came immediately under the present position of our *lāhem* this may have been inserted by accident. The *hêmmāh* would then be a later addition. Many prefer to emend *hêmmāh* to *gam*, "even to themselves," i.e. "even in their own estimation" (McN.), and so, as it seems, the LXX, καὶ γε αὐτοῖς, joining the clause to *v.* 19.

beasts] Not living creatures in general (*chayyôth*, Ps. civ. 25;

befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one [1]breath; and man hath no preeminence

[1] Or, *spirit*

Ezek. i. 5; cf. Rev. iv. 6), but cattle (*bhēmah*), by derivation (as it seems), dumb brutes. For the thought, cf. Pss. xlix. 12, 20, lxxiii. 22.

19. The similarity of man to beast (*v.* 18) is developed. What happens to man happens also to beast, each dies. All have one spirit. Man has no advantage over the beast. For all is vanity.

that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts] So also the A.V. the old versions and most moderns (e.g. Dr., McN.). But it requires a slight alteration in the vocalisation. The R.V. margin gives the only possible rendering of the Masoretic text: "The sons of men are a chance, and the beasts are a chance." So Del. For "chance," see ii. 14, note. Some commentators strangely suppose that the Masoretic text is a correction made to modify the comparison of man to beast. But in fact the very reverse is the case. It completely identifies chance with man, and chance with beast. Compare xii. 13, note, and Ps. cix. 4, "I prayer," which our poor English tongue is obliged to weaken to "I give myself unto prayer." A more serious objection to the Masoretic vocalisation is that the nuance of the third *chance* (*vide infra*) is slightly different from that of the first two. They suggest chance in the abstract, whether good or ill, but it suggests the mischance of death. On the whole the Masoretic vocalisation is to be preferred.

even one thing befalleth them] Literally, "and one chance to them." But many MSS. with LXX and Pesh. omit the copula, and so Dr. The translation would then be literally, "For as for the chance of the sons of men, and the chance of the beast — one chance have they."

breath (*rûach*)] R.V. marg. "spirit." See *v.* 21; Gen. vi. 17. Contrast *infra*, xii. 7. Compare Ps. civ. 29 for this and the next verse.

preeminence (*môthar*)] Lit. "advantage," "profit." The Heb. word occurs elsewhere in Prov. xiv. 23, xxi. 5 only. It is of the same root as *yithrôn* (i. 3, note), and *yôthēr* (ii. 15, vi. 8, 11). The last passage is very instructive for in Hebrew it is *ma-yôthēr*, "what advantage?" And this seems to have been the text used by the LXX here (*τί ἐπερίσσευσεν*), Symm. (*τί πλέον*) and Theod. (*τίς περισσεία*). Vulg. and Pesh., on the other hand, seem to have had our present text, which must stand unless we eliminate the negative. For the LXX, *τί ἐπερίσσευσεν...*; *οὐδέν*, is a very harsh construction in the Heb., though accepted by McN.

20 above the beasts: for all is vanity. All go unto one place;
21 all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit [1]of man [2]whether it goeth upward,

[1] Heb. *of the sons of men.* [2] Or, *that goeth*

all is vanity] The precise phrase in i. 2, note; xii. 8 †.

20. This verse expands and defines *v.* 19. All, both man and beast go to the grave; they come from the dust, and return to it.

All go] We see the procession, the totality of men and beasts going on to the tomb.

unto one place] i.e. "the dust" (see also xii. 7). Qoh. speaks only of burial; he does not mention She'ôl here any more than Job does in x. 9. But Qoh. believes in She'ôl (ix. 10), cf. Job vii. 9.

dust. . .dust] Gen. ii. 7, iii. 19, cf. Ecclus. xl. 11 *a*, xli. 10 (but not the Heb. text).

21. The fate of the bodies of man and beast is clear (*v.* 20). What of their "spirits"? The popular belief is that man's "spirit" goes up and the beast's "spirit" goes down, but who knows this? Evidence for difference between them there is none.

On the possibility that this verse is an interpolation by a materialistic reader, see Introd. p. xlv. Yet the phrase "who knoweth" is characteristic of Qoh. (ii. 19, etc.).

Who knoweth] Some MSS. with LXX, Pesh., read "And who," as in many verses. The copula rightly shows the close connexion with *v.* 20, but weakens the question. The words imply a negative answer (ii. 19, note), and cannot be taken, with Saadia (*Emunôth wde'ôth*, ch. vi. 8), in the sense "Who understands?"

the spirit of man (lit. "of the sons of men," *v.* 19, but *filiorum Adam*, Vulg., here). . .*the spirit of the beast*] They are regarded as identical, as in *v.* 19. Pod. has a long note endeavouring to show that *spirit* (*rûach*) here is only the breath, or the vital force, and quite different from the personality (*nephesh*), about which therefore Qoh. here says nothing. The breath is so all-important to the body of man and beast that it must surely have come from God (Ps. civ. 30; Job xxxiv. 14; Ezek. xxxvii. 5)—but what happens to it? Is it a fact that man surpasses the beast so much that in the one case it goes up, in the other down?

But to limit *rûach* to the meaning of *breath* is very precarious. For again and again it is used of the disposition (e.g. vii. 8), or character (e.g. Ps. li. 10), which comes very near to what in man we call personality, though in beasts we leave it unnamed, because of our ignorance of its constituents. We assume its imperfection, but whether that imperfection is such as to condemn it to earth while man's comparative perfection mounts upwards we do not know. In xii. 7 Qoh. says nothing about the beast, but does say that though the body of man returns to earth, the spirit of man returns to God.

and the spirit of the beast [1]whether it goeth downward to the earth? Wherefore I saw that there is nothing 22
better, than that a man should rejoice in his works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him *back* to see what shall be after him?

[1] Or, *that goeth*

whether it goeth upward...whether it goeth downward] This translation involves a slight alteration of the vocalisation, but must be adopted with all the old versions and most moderns. For though the A.V., with R.V. margin, has in each case "that goeth," the "it" found in the Hebrew in each case necessitates a question. The Masoretic punctuation is due to orthodoxy, the desire to state definitely that the spirit of man ascends, and the spirit of the beast descends. The knowledge spoken of would then be to know the nature of the spirit of each. But with the emendation it is to know whether the spirits of man and of beast respectively ascend and descend.

upward (Ecclus. xl. 11, Heb.)...*downward*] The latter implies cessation of existence, the former, continued existence of some kind in a region which is naturally placed "above" the earth into which the bodies are put[1]. The question of such incorporation with the Divine as to lose consciousness of a separate existence does not arise, and probably did not suggest itself to Qoh. He was no Pantheist, even of the Stoic kind.

22. The result of Qoh.'s thought and experience is—Let a man rejoice in the details of his present life, for such joy is his privilege. For he can never come back to life to see what happens afterwards.

saw] ii. 13, 24, notes.

for that is his portion] v. 18. The thought is the same as *v.* 13, "the gift of God," and ii. 24. The invectives of Wisd. ii. 9, are directed against the abuse of Qoh.'s words. Introd. p. xxviii.

for who shall bring him back] The A.V. omits "back" (with Pod.), understanding the word to refer to mental guidance. But the idiom is then unique, though guidance in the affairs of life seems to be intended in Ps. lxxviii. 71, and it is better to keep the usual meaning of actually bringing a person. In this case it must mean "bring back" after death (R. Levi ben Gerson). Observe that while this suggests a belief in continued existence after death it does not require it, for the phrase could be used popularly of any thing dead. And here Qoh. is not concerned with continued existence but with life on earth.

to see what] The translation is not certain. For in ii. 1 the same Heb. construction means "to look on with pleasure," "to enjoy." And this gives good sense here—you cannot return after death

[1] "Naturally," in this context, but nowhere else in the O.T. apparently. For She'ôl (Hades) is always thought of as below ground.

to enjoy what will be on earth. But it is generally understood as "to gaze at with interest" (*Oxford Lex.*), or perhaps merely "to behold."

after him] i.e. after he has died. So vi. 12, cf. ii. 18, x. 14. But perhaps the Heb. word has the more general sense of "afterwards," ix. 3; Jer. li. 46. So Symm., μετὰ ταῦτα (Podechard). It is clear that it refers to what is going on upon earth, as definitely in vi. 12. Many understand the sentence quite wrongly, as though it meant enjoy life now, for you cannot know what will happen in the other world (so Levy).

Additional Note on *v.* 17.

for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work] So also the A.V.

purpose] Rather, "concern," see *v.* 1, note.

The sentence reads smoothly in the A.V. and the R.V., but a literal translation of the Heb. is "For there is a time to every concern, and over (or, 'with reference to') all the work—there." The ambiguity and the harshness of the original is now apparent. The chief difficulty is *there* (*shâm*, which it will be noticed stands at the very end of the sentence):

I. If the consonants be retained the following explanations have been given:

(1) "then." Vulg. *tunc erit*. But *shâm* very rarely if ever has a temporal signification (Ges.-Buhl, *Lex.* quotes indeed Ps. xiv. 5, xxxvi. 12, cxxxii. 17, and lxvi. 6; Job xxiii. 7).

(2) As answering to "under the sun" in *v.* 1. Judgment will take place as the world goes on.

(3) As meaning "with God, in the Divine plan or scheme" (*Oxf. Lex.*). Perhaps Gen. xlix. 24 supports this.

(4) In She'ôl. See Job iii. 17, 19; cf. i. 21 (Levy).

(5) Read *sâm*. God "set" a time, etc. (Del.). If so it should be moved close to "a time," for its present position is almost impossible.

II. The Hebrew, however, is intolerable. And it will be observed that "a time" (*'êth*) is followed first by "for," and secondly by "over" or "in relation to" (*'al*). But it does not appear that *'êth* is ever connected with *'al*. Therefore emendations have been proposed for *shâm*:

(1) "a season" (*zmān*, *v.* 1), "and in relation to all the work a season." This is euphonic, but *zmān* is never followed by *'al*, though, as it occurs but rarely, the objection is not so serious as with *'êth*.

(2) "judgement" (*mishpāt*, *v.* 16). This gives excellent sense, and is to be accepted, though not very euphonic at the end of the verse. It is connected however with *'êth* in viii. 6. If it was original one must suppose that one copyist shortened it (*MSH*, perhaps with a mark of abbreviation) and the next transposed the letters (Podechard). It is followed by *'al* in 1 Chr. xxiii. 31.

Then I returned and saw all the oppressions that are 4
done under the sun: and behold, the tears of such as
were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the
side of their oppressors there was power, but they had

(3) "He set His decree" (*sām chuqqô*). This would give excellent sense and be euphonic, but there is no more trace of this in the versions, etc., than of any other proposed emendation. For *chōq* see Job xxviii. 26, for *sām chōq*, Ex. xv. 25; Josh. xxiv. 25; for *chōq 'al* 2 Chr. xxxv. 25. Possibly also the original text of Job xxxviii. 10, was, "and I set my decree upon it" (*wāāsīm 'ālāw chuqqî*).

(4) Omit the word altogether, with the Vatican MS. of the LXX (not AC), as a mere corruption. But this leaves the difficulty of the governance of *'al* ("over" or "in relation to") unexplained.

Ch. IV. 1—16. Social Problems.

1—3. The weak and oppressed. Qoh. enlarges upon the thought of iii. 16, where however the oppressors are limited to persons exercising judicial authority. He is no mere egotist; the woes of others pierce his very heart. As he contemplated them it seemed better to be dead than to be alive, and best of all not to have been born.

1. *Then I returned*] The A.V. and R.V. apparently follow Aben Ezra in supposing the writer to mean that he turns away from thinking (iii. 22) that it was good for a man to rejoice. But it is a very common Hebrew idiom (Gen. xxvi. 18; Isa. vi. 13), in which the first verb only defines the action of the second (G.-K. § 120 *d*), the translation being, "And I saw again," or in idiomatic English, "And again I saw."

all the oppressions] Such as the poor and the weak have always had to bear. The substantive recurs in Amos iii. 9; Job xxxv. 9, the thought of the latter passage having much in common with our verse. The same form in the next clause is a participle, "oppressed."

and behold] Here a *pāṣêq* (i. 13, note, p. 11) calls for a pause by the reader, enhancing the effect of the following words.

and on the side of (*mi-yad*) *their oppressors there was power*] So also A.V., but improbably. For *mi-yad* occurs at least 115 times and seems never to have this meaning. It is generally used with a verb of "taking" or "delivering" in the sense of "out of the hand (or power) of." And perhaps in the original text of our passage it had that meaning here. Compare Targ., "And it is not possible to deliver them from the hand of them that oppress them with might of hand and power." As the text stands however we must translate, "and from the hand of their oppressors (goes forth) power," meaning that the oppressors have autocratic power

2 no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are
already dead more than the living which are yet alive;
3 yea, [1]better than them both *did I esteem* him which hath

[1] Or, *better than they both is he which &c.*

and there is no use in trying to resist them. Hence the paraphrase by the Vulg., *nec posse resistere eorum violentiae*. It is, by the by, quite unnecessary to assume that the Vulgate had a text in front of it in which the negative of the preceding clause was repeated. But the word for *power* (*kôaḥ*) cannot be translated "violence" with Del.

For the rendering *on the side of* appeal is made to Deut. xxxi. 26, "by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD" (*mitsad 'arôn*, etc.), but it will be observed that the Heb. substantive is different. The English versions require the alteration of *mi-yad* to *byad*, but the Masoretic text is preferable.

but they had no comforter] Not *but* but "and" as before. The repetition is curious, and is probably due to dittography, and the clause should be omitted.

It is worthy of note that Pesh. renders this second *comforter* by "helper," the clause is paraphrased in the Vulg. by *cunctorum auxilio destitutos*. Levy too renders it by "helper," claiming that the root *nicham* expresses active kindness in Isa. xii. 1, xlix. 13 *al.* But it is improbable that the word would be used in different meanings in one verse without some plain indication of the change.

2. The misery of others grieves Qoh. so much that he says the dead are better off than the living. There is no real contradiction to this in ix. 4, xi. 7 *sq.* for Qoh. is not writing a logical treatise. From some points of view the dead are necessarily worse off than the living. "Celle à laquelle il songe lui paraît toujours la plus misérable" (Pod.).

Wherefore I praised] The Hebraist will note that the infinitive absolute here (as often) carries on the "I saw again" of *v.* 1, and that, because the two phrases are rather far apart, the personal pronoun is repeated, for clearness' sake. Similarly a personal pronoun follows an infinitive absolute in Esth. ix. 1 †.

praised (*shabbēach*)] In Pss., Chron., Eccles. †, besides in the Aram. of Dan. It is thus a late word in Heb. and presumably an Aramaism. "Stilleth" (R.V.) in Prov. xxix. 11 is a different root.

3. But he who has not yet been born is better off than they, for he has not seen the ill doing which has been done in the wide world. Compare Job iii. 16; Jer. xx. 14—18; Sophocles, *Œdip. Col.* 1225, *μὴ φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον* ("not to have been born, is past all prizing, best," Jebb).

yea, better than them both did I esteem *him which hath not yet been*] This supposes that *him*, etc., is the object of a verb understood. So also the Vulg., *et feliciorem utroque iudicavi, qui necdum natus est*. So expressly G.-K. § 117 *l*. Others consider that the

not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

Then I saw all labour and every [1]skilful work, that [2]for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This also is 4

[1] Or, *successful*

[2] Or, *it cometh of a man's rivalry with his neighbour*

force of *I praised* (*v.* 2) is carried on, but against this is the absence of any parallel to connecting *better* (*tôb*) with *praise* (*shabbēach*). The R.V. marg. (cf. A.V.) is however preferable, "better than they both is he which, etc." For although the relative is preceded in the Hebrew by *'eth*, which generally marks the object, this particle sometimes merely emphasises the subject (G.-K. § 117 *m*). In other words, it marks out a thing or person for definite regard, even though this is what we call the subject of a verb. The French *c'est moi*, and the idiomatic English "It's me," are somewhat similar.

the evil work that is done under the sun] The meaning is not certain. Qoh. may refer to the actual sins and crimes committed, summing them up as one whole (Symm., τὰ κακὰ ἔργα τὰ γινόμενα, Vulg., *mala quae sub sole fiunt*), or, more probably, to the whole course of the world (ii. 17). And so apparently the LXX, followed by Pesh. and Jer.

4. Toil and skill bring envy. This too is vanity.

Then] Merely the copula, here marking a fresh point; cf. *vv.* 1, 7.

all labour] No article in the original, for Qoh. does not regard labour here as one whole, but "all" in each form and part as presented to him.

and every skilful work] Lit. "all the skilfulness of work," ii. 21, note.

that for this a man is envied of his neighbour] So also A.V. Literally, "that it is the envy of a man from (by) his neighbour." Though the Eng. version is a little paraphrastic it gives the true sense—that a man's success causes him to be envied by others. And this, Qoh. implies, spoils the man's enjoyment of what he has gained. For the construction of "envy," see Isa. xxvi. 11; Ps. lxix. 9.

The R.V. margin is, "it cometh of a man's rivalry with his neighbour," which, it will be noticed, is a good deal further from the literal sense. So Del., Wild., and others. But there is no parallel to the use of the preposition "from" in the sense required. Ps. xviii. 17, "they were too strong for (lit. 'from') me," quoted by Del. is different; superiority of strength suggests comparison; but the feeling of envy and zeal—almost our "competition"—hardly does so, in the man's own heart.

This also is vanity and a striving after wind] See i. 14, note.

5 vanity and a striving after wind. The fool foldeth his
6 hands together, and eateth his own flesh. Better is an handful [1]with quietness, than two handfuls [1]with labour and striving after wind.

[1] Or, *of*

5, 6. A Lazy Fool.

Qoh. brings forward a contrast to the hardworking successful man whose satisfaction is spoiled by his neighbour's jealousy. Why not then be lazy and do nothing, like the fool who says (*v.* 6) that a little with quietness is better than much with toil and vexation? Because (*v.* 5) he just folds his hands and ruins himself.

Siegfried, McN. (p. 22), Barton and Pod. give quite a different interpretation. According to them *v.* 6 is to be joined closely to *v.* 4. Instead of a man working hard, with the result that he is the object of envy, he would do better to enjoy a little with quietness. In this case *v.* 5 is a mere interpolation by one of the "wise men" (see Introd. p. xx). But it shows no sign of the "frigid didactic style" by which McNeile says every one of their utterances is marked. On the contrary it is as sharp and pungent as any of the verses indisputably Qoheleth's.

5. *The fool* (ii. 14) *foldeth his hands together*] The Heb. for *foldeth together* is the same as "embrace" in iii. 5, but it evidently here answers to our "fold." See also Prov. vi. 10 and its duplicate xxiv. 33.

and eateth his own flesh] A verbal correspondence occurs in Isa. xlix. 26, where it is used metaphorically of captives being fed on human flesh—yes, their own—and in Isa. ix. 20 (if the text is correct) where it pictures a famished person after war gnawing his own arm. Here also it may mean such extreme poverty and hunger, but more probably, only the ruin of his own welfare and of his family prosperity. "Laziness is suicide" (Barton).

6. The verse is the utterance of the fool (*vide supra*) and so the common text of the Vulg., and Aben Ezra. Compare the sluggard and his words in Prov. vi. 9—11, to which our passage may allude. For words similarly put into the mouth of a character, see *v.* 8.

Better] For the thought of the clause, see Prov. xv. 17, xvi. 19.

an handful . . . two handfuls] Though the syllable *hand* represents different words (both representing the hand as a hollow) the meaning appears to be identical, and the stress is on the number only.

with quietness . . . with labour, etc.] There is no preposition in the Heb., but, as often, the substantives define the manner in which a fact takes place. So Symm., Targ., Aben Ezra. The R.V.

Then I returned and saw vanity under the sun. There 7
is one that is alone, and he hath not a second; yea, he hath 8
neither son nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labour,
neither are his eyes satisfied with riches. For whom then,
saith he, do I labour, and deprive my soul of good? This
also is vanity, yea, it is a sore travail. Two are better than 9
one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For 10
if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him
that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift

margin has "of" *quietness*, "of" *labour*, when the substantives are considered as defining the material in which the fulness consists, cf. 1 Kings xvii. 12. So Del., McN. But here, as Tyler says, "such metaphorical language would be excessively strained."

quietness] Suggestive of well-being (vi. 5) and gentleness (ix. 17), in contrast to feverish activity (Isa. xxx. 15).

7, 8. The Wretchedness of the Solitary Worker.

7. *Then I returned and saw*] *v.* 1, note. "And again I saw."

vanity] "'an empty wretchedness'; when *hebel* occurs outside the usual formula, it requires a variety of renderings according to the context" (McN.). Perhaps "futility" is better here.

8. For the thought, cf. Ecclus. xiv. 4 (Heb.), "He that withholdeth from his soul gathereth for another."

For whom then, saith he, do I labour] His wretchedness is apparent to him; cf. ii. 18. A few commentators strangely imagine this clause to represent Qoh.'s own feelings, and regard it as evidence that he himself was old and solitary. The A.V. "*neither* saith he, for whom do I labour," follows the Vulg. (cf. also Targ.) in wantonly inserting a negative.

a sore travail] i. 13, note.

9—12. Two are Better than One.

The preceding verse suggests to the author other cases in which one person alone is badly off. It is unnecessary to attribute these verses to another writer (the *Chākām*, according to McN. and Pod.). A Talmudic proverb is, "Either companionship or death" (T.B. *Taanith*, 23 *a*).

9. Two are more sure than one of securing reward for their work. The next verse explains how this may be.

10. The verse explains *v.* 9.

if they fall] Hardly both, but one or other of them.

woe] x. 16.

another] Lit. "a second."

11. The gain of companionship may also be indirect, and independent of conscious activity.

11 him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have
12 warmth: but how can one be warm *alone*? And if a man prevail against him that is alone, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
13 Better is a poor and wise youth than an old and foolish king, who knoweth not how to receive admonition any

if two lie together] In the East persons do not undress, as we do, and get into bed, but, especially the poor, lie down on mats in their ordinary clothing, including, in particular, their outer robe (Ex. xxii. 26 *sq.*), with sometimes a coverlet over them (Isa. xxviii. 20). Hence the proximity of others (Lk. xi. 7, xvii. 34), contributes to warmth and comfort.

12. The value of companionship in times of danger.

if a man prevail against] The same verb (probably an Aramaism) is translated "is mightier" in vi. 10. If one person alone is set upon, he is overcome. But if there are two, they stand up against the foe.

and a threefold cord] Three in such a case are even better than two. For the proverbial two yea three, cf. Prov. xxx. 15. Naturally, a cord of three strands has more and longer power of resistance than one of only two. There is no allusion to father, mother, and child.

is not quickly broken] or, rather, "snapped asunder." See xii. 6 (note "be loosed").

13—16. The Transitoriness of Popularity.

Even the state of a king is unenviable. He (*v.* 13) may be old and foolish, unable any longer to perceive the signs of the times. Better off than he is a young and poor but wise man, who comes out of his prison—for though a king by birth he was born in poverty (*v.* 14). He in turn has a successor, a young man, and all men under the sun follow him (*v.* 15). He is the leader of multitudes—yet as he too grows old his subjects have no joy in him. For this also is vanity, and striving after wind (*v.* 16).

While the general thought of the passage is fairly clear, its text is uncertain, especially in *v.* 16, and the historical cases which Qoheleth has in mind are quite unknown to us. See the Note at the end of this chapter.

13. *Better*] Another example of "better" things.

poor (*miskên*] So ix. 15 *sq.*†, which speak of a somewhat similar case. In Assyrian *muškinu* is a "pauper, wretch (*armer, elender*)" or beggar (see Muss-Arnolt, *Lex.* 1905, p. 604).

youth] So in *v.* 15. Not necessarily a "child" (A.V.).

who knoweth not how to receive admonition (cf. xii. 12) *any more*] He has the fatal obstinacy of old age, his brain being too hardened to receive new impressions, and his will rejecting good advice.

more. For out of prison he came forth to be king; [1]yea, 14
even in his kingdom he was born poor. I saw all the living 15
which walk under the sun, that they were with the youth,
the second, that stood up in his stead. [2]There was no 16
end of all the people, even of all them over whom he was:

[1] According to some ancient versions, *whereas* the other *though born in his kingdom became poor.*

[2] Or, *There is no end, in the mind of all the people, to all that hath been before them; they also &c.*

14. *For out of prison he came forth to be king*] The young man started with every disadvantage save "wisdom."

prison] Lit. "house of prisoners." Doubtless right (Gen. xxxix. 20) though the Heb. word is slightly abbreviated, so that the Targ. can expound it homiletically as "the home of idolaters," by interpreting it literally "those who turn away" from God.

yea, even in his kingdom (i.e. the youth's own) *he was born poor*] He was not only a prisoner, but had from the first no position by wealth (nothing is said of his claim by birth) in the kingdom which he afterwards obtained. The R.V. margin, "whereas *the other* though born in his kingdom became poor," wrongly refers to the old king. And so the A.V., Symm., Vulg., Targ.

15, 16. Qoh. says no more about that youth, but speaks of another, who is at first welcomed with enthusiasm, and is afterwards disregarded.

15. *I saw*] This marks a fresh point, cf. i. 14, note.

all the living which walk under the sun] A pardonable Eastern hyperbole.

walk] The strong form of the Heb. word suggests a progress, a march (cf. Ps. lv. 14), as is clearly indicated in the next verse. Perhaps render "take their way," and so in viii. 10, xi. 9.

that they were with the youth, the second] Probably the R.V. means that the old king was the first and the youth the second (so Del., Wright). But though this in itself gives excellent sense one would have expected to find in Heb. the words in reverse order, "the second (namely) the youth." As it is, we must translate "the second youth" (so McN.). Some critics cut the knot by omitting "the second," Pod. suggesting that it has come from *v.* 10.

that stood up in his stead] The A.V. has "that shall stand," etc., but the Heb. tense is not necessarily identical with our Eng. "future."

16. The verse describes first the enthusiasm and then the disappointment felt by the people in the second youth. But the Hebrew halts, and is probably corrupt.

There was] No time is here expressed in the Hebrew, but the vivid present is more natural.

no end of all the people] Was the phrase originally a misreading

yet they that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and a striving after wind.

of *v.* 8, "there is no end of all his labour"? The awkwardness of it is suggested by the R.V. margin, "There is no end, in the mind of all the people, to all that hath been before them."

even of all them over whom he was] Lit. "all them in front of whom he was." He is pictured as marching at the head of innumerable hosts.

yet they that come after] The picture changes but slightly, for they who come at the end of the procession are described as finding no occasion for joy in him.

striving after wind] i. 17, note.

Additional Note on *vv.* 13—16.

There is no agreement about the identity of these kings.

i. Delitzsch. The old but foolish king is Astyages, King of Media (584—549 B.C.), and the poor but wise youth is Cyrus (549—529 B.C.). Del. does not accept the translation, "the second youth." It is uncertain whether Cyrus was born poor, and also whether he had been imprisoned; the authorities differ.

ii. Hitzig. The old but foolish king is the High Priest Onias II under Ptolemy III, Euergetes (246—221 B.C.). He refused to pay his sovereign the annual tribute from Palestine. The poor but wise youth is his nephew Joseph, who was raised to the position of chief tax-gatherer instead of Onias. (Josephus, *Antt.* XII. iv. 1—4, §§ 157—179.) But there is no evidence of the title of "king" being given to the High Priest so early. Here too no notice is taken of the second youth.

iii. Barton. The old but foolish king is Ptolemy IV, Philopator, who died in 205 B.C., foolish because he persecuted the Jews (3 Macc., *passim*). The poor but wise youth who had been in prison is Ptolemy V, Epiphanes (205—182 B.C.), who succeeded him when five years old, and may have been regarded with hope by the Jews. The second youth is Antiochus III ("the Great King") who became king of Syria when young (223—187 B.C.), and within seven years of the accession of Ptolemy V (say in 198 B.C.) was warmly welcomed as sovereign of Judaea (Jos. *Antt.* XII. iii. 3, §§ 131—134). This is very ingenious, but why Ptolemy V should be called poor is not apparent, and the identification of the second youth with Antiochus III is more than precarious, for he certainly was no longer young in 198 B.C.

iv. Winckler. The old but foolish king is Antiochus IV, Epiphanes (175—164 B.C.). The young but wise youth is his nephew Demetrius I, Soter (162—150), who at the death of his father Seleucus IV, Philopator (187—175), had been sent as a hostage to Rome. On the death of Antiochus IV he returned to Syria, seized the power from the young heir Antiochus V, Philopator, but was himself overthrown by "the second youth"

Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God; 5

Alexander Balas (150 B.C.). Yet we do not know that Demetrius was born poor. Besides, it is hardly possible that Ecclesiastes can have been written so late as this date requires.

v. Peters, on the other hand, thinks that the old king was Demetrius I himself, and the poor wise youth was Alexander Balas. But Alexander Balas was not a prisoner.

vi. Haupt combines elements from the last two theories, and thinks that the old but foolish king was Antiochus IV, Epiphanes —foolish, because he persecuted the Jews, and the poor wise one was Alexander Balas, although he did not succeed Antiochus IV immediately.

vii. Grätz even thinks of Herod the Great (37—4 B.C.) and his son Alexander, of whom Pod. writes, "Ce prince fut en effet jeté en prison par son père; mais il n'était ni pauvre, ni sage, et en outre il n'a jamais regné."

All these critics seem to forget that there were many kings and kinglets in those days, and that Qoh. may have referred to some persons well known to his first readers, who yet are quite unrecorded in history. We certainly are not justified in accepting any of the identifications proposed, however well one or two may suit the probable date of the composition of our book.

CH. V. In this chapter the enumeration of the A.V. and the R.V. is always one verse ahead of that of the printed texts of the Heb. and of the Versions. It should be remembered that the Heb. division into chapters is not Jewish by origin, but was invented, as it seems, by Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury († 1228), first for the Vulg., and was first used by the Jews *c.* 1330 A.D. (see Ginsburg, *Introduction to the Heb. Bible*, 1897, p. 25; Swete, *Introduction to the LXX*, 1900, p. 343). All the Eng. versions, apparently, followed the Archbishop's division until the A.V. of 1611, which courageously (but inconveniently) broke with the tradition, and divided the chapters here in accordance with the subjects. The 1536 edition of Luther's commentary, and the 1540 edition of his version, had already done so, as had the French version of Basle, 1555. Perhaps in the Latin MS. used by Langton our v. 1 happened to be the last words in a column or page, and he carelessly treated the top of the next column as the beginning of a new chapter.

1 (iv. 17)—**7** (6). Proverbial sayings concerning the worship of God; in general (*v.* 1); especially one should avoid saying too much (*vv.* 2, 3); and be careful in vows (*vv.* 4—7)

1 (iv. 17). *Keep thy foot*] So the Heb. text, as read aloud, but "thy feet," as written. There is no difference in the meaning. The use of "walk" in the moral sense is so common (e.g. Gen. xvii. 1) that "keep thy foot" † would be readily understood in the same way.

the house of God] i.e. the Temple, 1 Chr. ix. 11, and in other

for to draw nigh to hear is better than to give the sacrifice
2 of fools: for they know not that they do evil. Be not rash
with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter

late writings. "The house of the LORD" was the regular title in early books for the tabernacle (2 Sam. xii. 20), and the temple (1 K. iii. 1).

for to draw nigh to hear] The R.V. means "to draw nigh to God in order to hear," suggesting that instruction was given in the Temple, which is a very strained interpretation of the Heb. This means more naturally, "to draw nigh to hearing," i.e. to come as nigh as possible to obedience.

is better than] The Heb. has no word here for "better," but this may fairly be inferred, as in ix. 17.

than to give the sacrifice of fools] A paraphrase, the literal translation being "than fools giving a sacrifice." The meaning however is plain: attention to obeying God is preferable to such sacrifices as fools give (cf. 1 Sam. xv. 22). But in any case the Hebrew is strange, for "give" is never used of "sacrifice" (though Ex. xxx. 15; Num. xviii. 12 suggest it). Hence emendations have been proposed, partly on the basis of the LXX, which yield, "And draw nigh to hearing: (so) shall thy sacrifice be (better) than the gift of fools" (*mi-mittath ha-kṣîlîm zibcheka*). This has been interpreted as meaning that if thou dost listen to instruction in details thy sacrifice will be better than the gifts of persons who refuse to be told the proper ritual (Pod.). Yet it is questionable whether care for due ritual is any part of the teaching of this book.

for they know not that they do evil] Lit. "for they know not to do evil," which is obviously not the intention of Qoheleth. The R.V. is barely possible, though the interpretation is that of Jer. But "when they do evil" is better; cf. for the construction 2 Sam. xviii. 29; Isa. vii. 15. Various emendations have been proposed, e.g. to read "good" for "evil" (so the Sinaitic MS. of the LXX and Pesh.), or "good and evil" (Gen. iii. 5, Targ., Levy), or simply to add one letter and translate, "for they know not how to do anything else than evil" (*kî 'ênām yôd'îm mi-la'asôth rā'*, McN., Dr. in Kittel). T.B. *Berakoth*, 23 *a*, has an interesting discussion (see A. Cohen's translation, 1921).

2 (1). This and the next verse refer to prayer in general. The reader is warned against undue haste in saying his prayers. The author may have had the feeling that exactness of utterance was necessary (Targ.), but probably desired to remind his readers that the recital even of many prayers was of less value than a few said with conscientious attention. This agrees with the whole tenour of his book—his aim continually is to go down to realities. Compare Ecclus. vii. 14; Matt. vi. 7.

rash] Better "hasty," as in vii. 9, viii. 3.

hasty] i.e. quick, speedy, viii. 11.

[1]any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few. For a dream 3
cometh with a multitude of [2]business; and a fool's voice with a multitude of words. When thou vowest a 4
vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou vowest. Better is it that 5
thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh 6

[1] Or, *a word* [2] Or, *travail*

let thy words be few] The Mishna, *Berakoth*, IX. 7 (5), inculcates the duty of blessing God for evil as well as for good, and in the discussion upon this a saying is attributed to R. Meir (c. 130—160 A.D.), "A man's words should always be few before the Holy One, blessed be He, for it is said, 'Be not rash,' etc." (T.B. *Berakoth*, 61 *a*).

3 (2). Hebrew proverbs frequently border on the paradoxical, as the Book of Proverbs shows. Here the meaning is, As much business produces dreams, so do many words issue in a fool's utterance. The warning of *v.* 2 is enforced. *Vide infra*, *v.* 7.

business] i. 13, note.

4—7 (3—6). On Vows.

Pay without delay (*v.* 4) for a mere vow is worse than useless (*v.* 5). It is a serious matter, not to be overlooked by God on the excuse of haste (*v.* 6). For dreams and many words alike suggest being taken up with this world rather than with God (*v.* 7).

4 (3). Qoh. begins by quoting Deut. xxiii. 21 *a*, but he has the whole passage, *vv.* 21—23 in mind. See also Ecclus. xviii. 22 *sq.*

pleasure (*chêphetz*)] The same word is translated "purpose" in iii. 1, where see note. It means that God takes no interest in fools. Contrast Isa. lxii. 4, which may however represent less active emotion than that suggested in Luke ii. 14. The explanation that "fools have no fixed purpose" (Plu.) has no Biblical support.

5 (4). To us this is self-evident (Acts v. 4), but presumably some virtue was then attached to the mere making of a vow without its performance. So in later Judaism words as such had a restrictive value, even though there was no intention of fulfilling them literally (Mark vii. 11). The Talmudic tract *Nedarim* discusses the precise binding character of various formulae of vows. Cf. Prov. xx. 25.

6 (5). It will be well to consider the details first, and afterwards the verse as a whole.

to cause...to sin] This is a legitimate translation but not so closely in accordance with the context as "to cause...to incur the penalty of sin." Cf. Deut. xxiv. 4; Isa. xxix. 21.

to sin; neither say thou before the [1]angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and
7 destroy the work of thine hands? [2]For *thus it cometh to*

[1] Or, *messenger* of God See Mal. ii. 7.

[2] Or, *For in the multitude of dreams and vanities are also many words* or, *there are vanities, and in many words*

thy flesh] The whole personality on its passive and receptive side, ii. 3, xi. 10; Prov. xiv. 30.

before the angel] The R.V. margin has "messenger *of God*" (Mal. ii. 7), i.e. the priest, the one who offered the sacrifices for vows[1]. But in Malachi a reason for obedience to the priest is given: "for he is the messenger of the LORD of Hosts," showing that the word alone did not indicate a priest. *angel* therefore is preferable. But what angel? He who has the charge of awarding the punishment due in each case. The LXX paraphrases "before God," but this is hardly a various reading.

an error] x. 5. The word is often used in Lev. and Num. of an unintentional misdemeanour. Sacrifices must be offered for unintentional sins, but high-handed sins are punished severely (Num. xv. 22—31).

destroy] Or ruin (Isa. xxxii. 7), by His condemnation[2].

work] Better "works," with the Eastern school of Masoretes, LXX, Vulg., Targum.

We are now in a position to consider the verse as a whole.

(1) If *angel* means a priest the reader is warned not to let his hasty words in vowing bring him into condemnation for a sacrifice, and, in particular, not to excuse himself by saying his words were inadvertent, for God through His representatives will be angry, and his sacrifices be treated as worthless. Qoh. is thinking, according to this interpretation, only of ritual, and of material offerings.

(2) But if, as is probable, the angel is the Angel of Justice, we recognise in Qoh.'s words a solemn part of his belief, which is in accordance with his desire to reach the basis of sound religion. He pictures the angel—presumably in the Day of Judgement, though he does not say so—as listening to excuses and testing their truth. In the present case he—and therefore God—is angry

[1] Rashi, following the Midrash, *Eccles. Rabba*, explains the term of the synagogue official who comes to claim the alms that a man has rashly promised in public. Jews are not allowed to carry money on the sabbath; hence appeals for charity are answered by promises, for the payment of which an official duly calls. But nothing is known of such a practice in Biblical times.

[2] Rashi explains: excuses against paying alms promised will render those already paid worthless.

pass through the multitude of dreams and vanities and many words: but fear thou God.

at the vow made so hastily, and, finding the excuse invalid, ruins all the man's works in consequence. Thus a man's mouth brings his whole person into condemnation. For the thought compare Mal. iii. 1—5, iv. 1, 5.

7 (6). The end of the verse "but fear thou God" follows so suitably on *v.* 6 that many think the first part to be merely a gloss, derived in some fashion from *v.* 2. In favour of this is the uncertainty of its translation as it stands. The addition in the R.V. text of "thus it cometh to pass" is serious, and unwarranted by ancient testimony. The first rendering of the R.V. margin, "For in the multitude of dreams and vanities are also many words," gives a very poor sense. The second (For in the multitude of dreams) "there are vanities, and in many words" is better. The A.V. (and so nearly Del., Wild.), "For in the multitude of dreams and many words (there are) also (divers) vanities," arbitrarily alters the order of the sentence. Another proposal (Levy) is to insert "fools"—"For fools (live) in the multitude of dreams, and vanities, and many words, but fear thou God." This gives excellent sense, but is a mere conjecture. The best emendation is to read, "For in the multitude of *business* come dreams, and vanities in many words" (cf. *v.* 3).

thou] Unemphatic, because not a separate word, but only contained in the imperative. The σύ of LXX (B) is an emendation of the original σύν (AC). The stress is on *fear*, the duty of reverence for God and observance of His will.

8, 9 (7, 8). Injustice may be due to the whole System of Civil Government. The Exactions of an Oriental State.

Here we have a new theme which has been in part suggested by iv. 1—3, but stands in no connexion with the preceding verses. The relation of *vv.* 10 *sqq.* will be considered there.

8 (7). The Eng. reader generally supposes this verse to be an encouragement—the moral Governor of the universe, the highest of all powers, will at last do right. But however consonant this is with some of the teaching of the Book (xii. 14) it is a forced interpretation of the Heb. For even the Eng. versions suggest that *higher* is in the plural (*there be higher than they*). Some indeed have understood this to be a *pluralis majestatis* (*vv.* 11, 13, "owner") referring either to God or to the king, but probably it is strictly plural. The meaning then is that there is no need to wonder at the oppression of the poor and the wresting of justice, for this is only to be expected in a state where there is tier upon tier of subordinate and high officials, and higher officials still. Each watches suspiciously (1 Sam. xix. 11) the one under him. It is no marvel that the lowly and poor suffer.

8 If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and the violent
taking away of judgement and justice in [1]a province,
marvel not at the matter: for one higher than the high
9 regardeth; and there be higher than they. [2]Moreover the
profit of the earth is for all: the king *himself* is served
by the field.
10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver;
nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this also is

[1] Or, *the state*

[2] Or, *But the profit of a land every way is a king that maketh himself servant to the field* or, *is a king over the cultivated field*

oppression, iv. 1; *the poor*, iv. 14; *the violent taking away*, the substantive translated *violent* occurs only in Ezek. xviii. 18 ("violence"); *in a province*, ii. 8, note; *the matter*, iii. 1 ("purpose," note).

9 (8). For a detailed examination of this very difficult verse see the Additional Note at the end of the chapter. It is closely connected with *v.* 8, and probably the right translation is, "And the profit of (the) land is among the whole (of them, i.e. the grasping officials of *v.* 8)—even the wild land when cultivated has a king." The author means that not only do all the officials take their share of extortion, but even wild land falls under the exactions of the state directly it is cultivated.

10 (9)—vi. **12.** The Unsatisfying Character of Money.

The greed of the innumerable officials in an oriental state (*vv.* 8, 9) suggests to the writer the folly of such avarice. The subject is arranged as follows. Wealth cannot satisfy (*vv.* 10 (9)—12 (11)); it may be lost when the owner is too old to amass it again (*vv.* 13 (12)—17 (16)); therefore take enjoyment as from God (*vv.* 18 (17)—20 (19)). Again, a man may not be able to enjoy his wealth (vi. 1—6); present enjoyment is better than desire (*vv.* 7—9); therefore in view of the supremacy of God enjoy the present moment (*vv.* 10—12).

10 (9). A general statement. "Flacci quoque super hoc concordante sententia, qui ait: Semper avarus eget" (Jer.).

nor he that loveth] As the Heb. text stands (*'ōhēḇ* b-) there is a suggestion of an affectionate clinging to material possessions. But, as the construction is found here only, the second "b" may be only accidental.

abundance] So Ps. xxxvii. 16.

with increase] So also A.V., the verb "shall...be satisfied" being continued although the negative is repeated. But there seems to be no parallel to this construction. Hence it is better with most commentators to translate "and he who loveth abun-

vanity. When goods increase, they are increased that eat 11
them: and what advantage is there to the owner thereof,
saving the beholding *of them* with his eyes? The sleep of 12
a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much:
but the fulness of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

There is a grievous evil which I have seen under the 13
sun, *namely*, riches kept by the owner thereof to his hurt:

dance (has) no increase," i.e. none which he reckons of any real account.

increase] Generally the yield of crops, but occasionally of revenue (Isa. xxiii. 3).

11 (10). Even the mere increase of goods is useless. There will be more persons to consume them, and the only advantage their owner gets is the sight of them.

The first clause is even truer in the East than with us, for the more a man's wealth increases the more do his relations live upon him (Isa. xxii. 24). And the number of his servants and retainers grows far quicker than in Europe.

advantage] Not the common word for this. See ii. 21 ("skilfulness"). Perhaps "prize" or "success."

owner] Rightly in the singular (contrast A.V.), for the Heb. is the *pluralis majestatis*, as is shown by "his eyes" at the end of the verse. So also in *v.* 13, vii. 12 ("him that hath it"), viii. 8 ("him that is given to it"). The receptive powers of an individual are strictly limited.

12 (11). Further, the unsatisfying character of mere wealth is shown by the fact that the labourer sleeps well, eat he little or much, but the rich man cannot, just because of his abundance.

a labouring man] Exactly our "labourer," one who tills the land (*v.* 9 (8)).

fulness] The Heb. word in this exact form (*saba'*) always elsewhere means "abundance" (A.V.), "plenty" (Gen. xli. six times; Prov. iii. 10 †). In this case the care of this world keeps him awake. But the preceding clause suggests here the connotation of abundance of food, "satiety," as is the common meaning of kindred forms of the root.

13 (12). Again, wealth unused may injure its possessor. Qoh., it would seem, is not referring to the moral injury he receives by hoarding, the shrivelling up of the character by continued meanness, but only to what is often seen, that a man saves and saves, and then his wealth is suddenly lost—presumably by no direct fault of his own—when he perhaps most needs it.

grievous] The image is that of illness, "a morbid evil" (Del.). And so in *v.* 16.

kept by] Better than the A.V. "kept for." The latter suggests keeping by powers outside the owner.

owner] *v.* 11, note.

14 and those riches perish by evil [1]adventure; and if he
15 hath begotten a son, there is nothing in his hand. As he
came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he go again
as he came, and shall take nothing for his labour, which
16 he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a grievous
evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what

[1] Or, *travail*

14 (13)] A further point. Suppose (as has already been suggested) he loses his money and he has a son, then he has nothing to leave him.

and those riches perish] This is probably the protasis: "and when that wealth is lost in some bad transaction."

by evil adventure] See i. 13, note ("a sore travail").

and if he hath begotten a son] The protasis is continued.

there is nothing in his hand] Apodosis. Whose hand? Probably the father's, for he is the subject of the next verse.

15 (14). Job (i. 21) says, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." But that was the expression of his humble acceptance of the will of God in the disasters that had befallen him. Here the words are almost similar but the thought is different. For to say specifically of the parsimonious person that he will not carry material wealth away with him when he dies is a mere truism, for it is self-evident of all, rich and poor alike. It must state something of him which is not universally applicable. This is that when he is dying he gets no gain for all his trouble. A man may have at that time the satisfaction of having done well in his life, but this niggardly man will not, for his money has been lost. Naked he was born, and naked he dies. He gets no advantage to carry away with him. The Targ. goes too far, but is on the right lines, by saying that he will carry no merit into the other world.

naked shall he go again] The thought is not that he shall return to the womb (i.e. of mother earth, Ecclus. xl. 1), but, speaking generally, pass again into that invisible world from which he came.

take] i.e. gain, receive; cf. *v.* 19.

which he may carry away] This is preferable to the reading adopted by the LXX, Symm., Targ., Jer., "which may go."

16 (15). Here the writer passes to a statement about men in general. They go as they came and gain nothing save mere wind.

a grievous evil] *v.* 13, note.

that in all points as he came] The Hebrew can hardly bear this translation. An alteration of the vowels gives, "just as he came," and the repetition of one letter, "every man, just as he came."

profit hath he that he laboureth for the wind? [1]All his 17
days also he eateth in darkness, and he is sore vexed and
hath sickness and wrath.

Behold, [2]that which I have seen to be good and to be 18
comely is for one to eat and to drink, and to enjoy good
in all his labour, wherein he laboureth under the sun,

[1] The Sept. has, *All his days are in darkness and mourning, and much vexation and sickness and wrath.*

[2] Or, *that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one &c.*

for the wind] The real result of all his toil. Cf. Qoh.'s common phrase, "a striving after wind" (i. 14).

17 (16). Yet the penurious rich man has spent all his life in misery!

he eateth in darkness] Benzinger says, *Hebr. Archäologie*, 1907, p. 96, "The lamp had to burn unceasingly....So to-day with the fellachin and Bedouin, if one says of a person 'He sleeps in darkness' it is as much as saying, 'He hasn't a farthing left to buy oil with; it's all over with him.'" So with this rich man—he stints himself as though he were in the extremest poverty (cf. also Del.).

The R.V. margin, following the LXX, Vulgate, and in some points the other versions, changes the Heb. verbs into substantives, "all his days are in darkness and mourning (ואבל for יאכל), and much vexation and sickness and wrath." This at least has the merit of simplicity, and the alterations in the Hebrew are very slight.

and hath sickness and wrath] This is only a paraphrase of the Heb. text, which is literally, "and his sickness and wrath." One can emend by leaving out either "his" (see R.V. margin above), or the second "and," when the translation will be, "and wrath is his sickness," i.e. his continual grumbling makes him ill. In Aram. the root means sadness as well as anger. Compare 1 Tim. vi. 9 *sq.*

18 (17). Rather, let a man enjoy the material happiness that God gives him.

Behold, that which I (*I* emphatic, *I* Qoheleth, as Pesh. adds) *have seen to be good and to be comely is for one to*, etc.] The R.V. is right in rejecting the guidance of the accents (R.V. marg., "that which I have seen: it is good and comely for one"), but it is better still to translate, "to be good, that it is comely," etc.

I have seen] i. 14, note.

good...comely] Supposed by some to be a translation of καλὸν κἀγαθόν. But if so Qoh. has reversed the words, and has not even retained the same conjunction. See Introd. p. xxxi.

to eat and to drink, etc.] ii. 24, notes; iii. 13.

[1]all the days of his life which God hath given him: for
19 this is his portion. Every man also to whom God hath
given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to
eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in
20 his labour; this is the gift of God. For he shall not much
remember the days of his life; because God answereth *him*
in the joy of his heart.

[1] Heb. *the number of the days.*

all the days of his life] ii. 3, note.

for this is his portion] iii. 22, note.

19 (18) Yes! with every man who has wealth, and God permits him to enjoy both it and his toil—this is God's gift. The reference is not to wealth as such, but to the ability to enjoy it. The verse is almost a verbal repetition of iii. 13, where see notes. Cf. also iii. 22.

wealth] vi. 2. The word (*nkāṣīm*) is in the plural, and means possessions of all kinds.

and hath given him power] Contrast vi. 2 and see ii. 19 (note "yet shall he have rule").

to eat] Here metaphorically.

take] *v.* 15 (14), note.

20 (19). The general meaning of the verse is plain in spite of the uncertainty of the second half. He who takes the joys of each day as they come will not brood over the future, whether his days then be happy or not.

remember] Referring to the future, xi. 8.

answereth] The form (Hiphil participle) occurs here only, and the meaning is very uncertain.

(1) The LXX, Vulg., Jer. understand it to be of the same root as that in i. 13, iii. 10, "God occupies him with the joy of his heart," or even "his heart with joy." Zap. accepts the same root, but by removing the first letter (which is the same as the last letter of the preceding word) translates "God occupies Himself with the joy of his (such a man's) heart." The man thus rests confidently on God, thanking Him for His care manifested in the gift mentioned in *v.* 19 (18).

(2) Others find only the common root "answer," either as R.V. (i.e. God responds to his desires in the joy that the man receives), or as Hitzig, "God causes (all things) to respond in the joy of his heart," which seems farfetched. Dr. (in Kittel) gets the same translation as the R.V. by removing the first letter (see above). On the whole, the first letter must go, and the R.V. is preferable to Zap.

Del.'s explanation is very attractive, but fanciful—"God

answereth, grants the request of, the joy of his heart," i.e. makes his joy heart-joy, felt in the depths of his heart. McN.'s, "answereth by," or "with," (i.e. by giving him) the gladness of his heart (see Ps. lxv. 5; 1 K. xviii. 24) is essentially the same as the R.V.

Additional Note on *v.* **9** (8).

9 (8). This verse is susceptible of many interpretations, dependent on (1) whether the word translated *is served* refers to *the king*, or is to be taken with *the field*, and rendered "cultivated"; (2) whether in the first clause the *profit* (i. 3, note) is received *by* the land or gained *from* it.

(1) *the king* himself *is served by the field*. Although the verb "to serve" is often used of a king (1 Sam. xi. 1), yet it is never so used in the passive or reflexive voice (Niphal) employed here. Also, if it were so used, the construction "by" is very unusual in Heb. On the other hand, we find the passive voice used of land in Deut. xxi. 4 ("a valley...neither plowed") and Ezek. xxxvi. 9, 34 ("tilled"). We shall therefore act wisely in rendering it "cultivated" and connecting it with "field." So the second R.V. margin, "a king over the cultivated field."

(2) We may now return to the first clause. (*a*) The first part of the R.V. margin is often accepted and the second margin joined to it, the result being, "But the profit of a land (in) every way is (to have) a king over the cultivated field." Qoh. will then be drawing a contrast to *v.* 8. The usual state is a hierarchy of officials, but a state is much better off when the king's interest is in agriculture. But however true this is, it is a very sudden and unexpected change of thought here. (*b*) It is preferable to interpret (apparently with R.V. and A.V.) the profit as that which is derived *from* the land. The translation *earth*, we should note, is erroneous, for it suggests the soil, and it really refers (as usual) to the land as a geographical expression. The clause therefore continues the thought of *v.* 8; all the various ranks of officials get profit out of the land (lit. "and the profit of (the) land is among the whole (of them)." For the personal reference of *all*, see iii. 20, vi. 6.

(3) What then of the last words of the verse? *The field* is properly the open wild countryside (2 Sam. xvii. 8), and afterwards a definite portion of this taken up in agriculture (Gen. xxxvii. 7; Mic. ii. 2, 4). So the writer, continuing his thought, adds "(even) the wild land (or, 'a piece of land') when cultivated has a king." He means that there is no escape from exactions. If a man leaves his work in a town and takes up a bit of uncultivated land and tills it—he finds that at once the royal officials mark his action, and claim a share of his harvest for the king. Cease, says Qoh., to wonder at exactions; they belong to the system of government; none can escape or elude them.

6 There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and
2 it is heavy upon men: a man to whom God giveth riches,
wealth, and honour, so that he lacketh nothing for his
soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not power
to eat thereof, but a stranger eateth it; this is vanity,
3 and it is an evil disease. If a man beget an hundred

CH. VI. **1—6.** AGAIN, A MAN MAY NOT BE ABLE TO ENJOY HIS WEALTH.

He has everything but cannot "eat" it (*v.* 2). He may have many children and live long but not be satisfied (*v.* 3 *a*). He may not even be buried—an untimely birth is better off! (*vv.* 3 *b*—5). The longest life comes to an end at last (*v.* 6).

1. Introduction.

is heavy upon] Lit. "is great upon" as in viii. 6. The A.V. here, "is common among," is taken from the Vulg. *frequens apud homines*, but is improbable, though it may find some support from Ex. xxiii. 29.

men] Right (cf. i. 13), and so Symm., Vulg., Targ., Pesh., but "the man" in question is not impossible (LXX).

2. A man who is wealthy and has everything that heart can desire yet dies without enjoying it, and one who is no relation to him inherits it all. Apparently the man is supposed to die young.

In iv. 7 *sq.* the thought is nearly similar, but there stress is laid on the man having denied himself much in order to have the more to enjoy at last.

riches, wealth (v. 19 (18), note), *and honour*] The three words come in the same order in the narrative of the glory given to Solomon, 2 Chr. i. 11 *sq.* *Honour*, here clearly not moral but material—"glory," "splendour" (Ps. xlix. 16).

he lacketh nothing for his soul] Contrast iv. 8, where another part of the same verb means "deprive."

his soul] i.e. himself, ii. 24, iv. 8.

giveth...power] v. 19 (18), note.

a stranger (*nokrî*)] A foreigner (Deut. xv. 3; xvii. 15), here presumably to include any one who was no relation to the rich man. Or perhaps literally a foreigner, if it was the case that if a man died intestate under the Persian or Greek rule his possessions passed to the crown.

an evil disease] The exact phrase is unique, but cf. v. 13 (12), 16 (15).

3. Another example. It might be thought that a short life and the lack of natural heirs were the supreme examples of "vanity" (*v.* 2). Not so. A man may have a hundred children and live long—yet if he is still unsatisfied and receives no burial he is worse off than an untimely birth. Artaxerxes III (Ochus, 358—338 B.C.) was poisoned (Diod. Sic. xvii. 5) and his body is said

children, and live many years, so that the days of his years be many, but his soul be not filled with good, and moreover he have no burial; I say, that an untimely birth is better than he: for it cometh in vanity, and 4 departeth in darkness, and the name thereof is covered with darkness; moreover it hath not seen the sun [1]nor 5

[1] Or, *neither had any knowledge*

to have been thrown to the cats, but it is not probable that Qoh. refers to this.

an hundred children] A round number, but cf. Ahab (2 K. x. 1), Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 21).

so that] A paraphrase of an unusual construction. Literally, "and it is many that the days of his years are." The thought of day succeeding day saves the clause from mere tautology.

good] Not moral but material, iv. 8, v. 11 (10).

and moreover] The climax of woe—if he has no burial. Isa. xiv. 19 *sq.*; Jer. xvi. 4 *sq.*, xxii. 19; Bel and the Dragon, *v.* 32 (LXX, not Theod. or R.V.). It was thought that the spirit of the unburied would find no rest. Barton quotes from the end of the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh:

> He whose dead body is thrown on the field,
> Thou hast seen, I see,
> His spirit rests not in the earth.
> He whose spirit has none to care for it,
> Thou hast seen, I see,
> The dregs of the pot, the remnants of food,
> What is thrown in the street, must eat.

JENSEN, *Assyrisch-Babylonische Mythen und Epen*, 1900, p. 265.

The last sentence is illustrated by the widespread habit of supplying tombs with offerings for the dead to eat and drink. (For Egypt see the pictures in M. G. Kyle, *Moses and the Monuments*, 1920.)

an untimely birth] Job iii. 16; Ps. lviii. 8. Compare also Job x. 18.

4, 5. The author expands the comparison with an untimely birth.

4. *it*] Rightly, though the A.V. and a few commentators render "he," referring to the rich man.

the name thereof] Everything has a name (*v.* 10, note), but in the case of the stillborn child it is not made known, but is, and will be, "covered with darkness."

5. *moreover*] Another and serious element of loss—"sun saw it never," i.e. it had no life on earth, never having had experience of its trials or its joys (Ps. lviii. 8).

6 known it; [1]this hath rest rather than the other: yea,
though he live a thousand years twice told, and yet
7 enjoy no good: do not all go to one place? All the labour
of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled.

[1] Or, *it is better with this than with the other*

nor known it] The margin is preferable, "neither had any knowledge." For the absolute use of the Hebrew word, see ix. 11; Ps. lxxiii. 22 (lit. "and know not").

Symm., Vulg., Targ. join this with the following word "rest." The LXX (ἀναπαύσεις is only an itacism for ἀνάπαυσις), Pesh. do not.

this hath rest (*nachath*) *rather than the other*] For *rest* see iv. 6 (note, "quietness"). The stillness of the untimely birth is preferred to the wanderings of the unburied.

The R.V. margin, "it is better," has its origin in the Talmudical use of a similar word (*nôach*), e.g. T.B. *Erubin*, 13 *b*, "It is better for a man not to have been created." But we must not forsake the usage of Eccles. Compare Job iii. 13.

6. If the rich man has lived twice as long as Methuselah, and has had no enjoyment of life, what advantage to him is length of years? There is but one end to all men—the grave.

a thousand years twice told] Methuselah lived 969 years.

and yet enjoy no good] v. 18 (17); cf. *v.* 3.

do not all go to one place?] The grave or She'ôl, see iii. 20. Life once wasted, without enjoying what it can give, does not return. The whole of mankind leaves it for ever.

7—9. The author is still thinking of the rich man who had no satisfaction in his wealth (*v.* 2). For (*v.* 7) we all toil to get enjoyment, yet are not satisfied. In this (*v.* 8) the wise is no better off than the fool, nor the poor when he knows how to live. Yes (*v.* 9), enjoyment is better than roving desires. Still, this too is vanity, etc., for there is no real satisfaction to be gained.

7. *man*] The word has the article, but this is either generic, or (as often in Heb.) singles out a man and holds him up, as it were, for inspection (i. 3, note).

the appetite] The Heb. word is "the soul" as in *v.* 3 and *v.* 9 ("desire"), but the R.V. and A.V. are right in explaining it as the personality on its lower and more sensuous side; cf. Prov. xvi. 26; Isa. xxix. 8). "All labour, the author means to say, is in the service of the impulse after self-preservation; and yet, although it concentrates all its efforts towards this end, it does not bring full satisfaction to the longing soul" (Del.).

McN. thinks this verse is an addition by the *Chākām* (Introd. p. xx), but it fits admirably into the context, as Barton says.

8. The verse recalls ii. 14—16 but the point of similarity is there a common death, here a common desire. Naturally, if

For what advantage hath the wise more than the fool? 8
[1]*or* what hath the poor man, that knoweth to walk before
the living? Better is the sight of the eyes than the 9
wandering of the desire: this also is vanity and a striving
after wind.

[1] Or, or *the poor man that hath understanding, in walking before the living*

v. 7 is omitted (*vide supra*) it takes its meaning from *v.* 6 and the reference is identical with that of ii. 14—16.

advantage] The same word is paraphrased in *v.* 11, "what is man the better," see also vii. 11.

or *what hath the poor man*] Dr Burkitt makes the attractive alteration "*except that* he knoweth" (*mibbal'adey* for *ma-leānî*).

that knoweth] Strictly, "when he knoweth." The R.V. margin is doubly wrong, for it also disconnects this word from the following clause—"the poor man that hath understanding, in walking," etc. Ginsburg and Dr. (in Kittel) unnecessarily read, "more than him that knoweth" to make this clause parallel to the preceding.

to walk before the living] The translation is right, the meaning being that this poor man knows how to live consistently with the wisdom he evidently has. Life in the East is much more public than with us, and "before" suggests that he is continually under the observation of his fellow men.

The LXX, Vulg., Pesh., seem to have read "Why does the poor know," but it is curious Hebrew in this connexion. They also translate "life" instead of "living," as though the poor man had ever his face towards "life"—life in its best sense. But this is not so natural. Even the Targ. takes it of persons, though they are "the righteous in the garden of Eden." For another, but different, example of a poor man, see ix. 13—16.

Siegfried attributes this verse to the *Chākām*, but McN. does not follow him in this.

9. McN. thinks the first half of the verse is by the *Chākām*, but unnecessarily.

the sight of the eyes] Not what is seen (though this is the usual meaning of the Hebrew word) but the power of seeing, and enjoying, and so in xi. 9. But Symm. is wrong in taking it of mental foresight, or spiritual vision, as Jer. expressly, "*iuxta sensum cuncta agere, qui animae est oculus.*"

the wandering of the desire] So Wisd. iv. 12, "the giddy whirl of desire" (R.V.).

this also] "This unsatiableness, characteristic of the soul, this endless unrest, belongs also to the miseries of this present life" (Del.).

10 [1]Whatsoever hath been, the name thereof was given
long ago, and it is known that it is [2]man: neither can he
11 contend with him that is mightier than he. Seeing there
be many [3]things that increase vanity, what is man the

[1] Or, *Whatsoever he be, his name was given him long ago, and it is known that he is man*

[2] Heb. *Adam*. See Gen. ii. 7. [3] Or, *words*

10—12. The passage may be compared with iii. 9—14. As Qoh. there said that man is unsatisfied and must enjoy the present life, but then falls back on the thought of the supremacy of God, so here Qoh., after making similar statements, turns to the greatness of Destiny and the uselessness of disputing with the Supreme (*vv.* 10, 11). For a man knows not what is good for him in this short and fleeting life, nor what will take place here after his death, affecting his property and heirs (*v.* 12). Qoh. means, Let him therefore take what God gives him gladly and humbly.

10. *Whatsoever hath been*] A general statement, i. 9. The R.V. marg. "whatsoever he be," referring to a man, is mistaken.

the name thereof was given long ago] In primitive thought the name summed up all the nature, character, actions, and good and evil fortune of the individual thing or person[1]. It was "already called" (as the literal translation is) before the thing or person actually came upon the scene. It therefore nearly answers to a man's Destiny. References to Ps. cxlvii. 4; Isa. xl. 26, are hardly in place.

and it is known that it is man] The meaning of the R.V. is, after all, man is only what he was called long ago, "man" (*'ādām*) out of the ground *'adāmah* (Gen. ii. 7), therefore weak and quite unable to contend with God. But the connexion with the preceding clause is not evident, and it is better to translate, "and that which he, even man, is, (stands) known." The whole future of the man on earth is fixed and known (the Heb. participle here used expresses such permanence) long before he appears.

neither can he contend with him that is mightier than he] For the Heb. word translated *mightier*, see iv. 12. The actual form here is doubtful, but is to be read as an adjective, as in the Aram. of Ezra iv. 20; Dan. ii. 40, 42, iv. 3 (iii. 33), vii. 7 †. The thought is that of Isa. xlv. 9; Rom. ix. 20. See also Job xxxiii. 12.

11. The preceding verse said, It is useless to complain; yes, Qoh. now adds, and worse than useless. For many words only increase "vanity," and the man is no better off.

seeing there be many things that increase vanity] While the singular of the common word *dābār* is used of a "thing" very widely, its plural in Biblical Heb. hardly means "things" save

[1] Many savage tribes regard the name as a vital part of themselves. See Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 3rd edn. ii. ("Taboo"), pp. 318 *sq.*

better? For who knoweth what is good for man in *his* 12
life, [1]all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as
a shadow? for who can tell a man what shall be after
him under the sun?

[1] Heb. *the number of the days.*

as historical events, or affairs, or actions. Here the R.V. margin "words" is doubtless right, and gives excellent sense. "For seeing it is a fact that many words increase vanity." Cf. v. 2 (1).

the better] Cf. *v.* 8, "advantage." There is no thought of moral improvement.

12. A further reason why it is worse than useless to dispute with God and His plans for us, is that we are ignorant what is really good for us in this short and fleeting life, and for our friends after we are gone.

what is good] Hardly in its best sense, the *summum bonum*, but rather good as a practical thing—what is best for a man to do in any particular difficulty. Qoh. was no theoretical philosopher; he kept himself to the more visible and immediate realities of life.

all the days of his vain life] Save for the addition of *vain* (ix. 9 *bis*, cf. vii. 15) the clause resembles ii. 3 (note) and v. 18 (17).

which he spendeth as a shadow] The Heb. verb nowhere else means "spend," and therefore Grätz and Barton suppose the phrase to be a Graecism (Acts xv. 33, ποιεῖν χρόνον), but it may well be translated "for he makes them like a shadow," so evanescent do they become when he dies (see McN.).

The *shadow* here can hardly refer directly to the man himself (viii. 13; Job xiv. 2; Ps. cix. 23) as Pod. thinks. Observe that Symm. translates, ἵνα ποιήσῃ αὐτὸν σκέπην, "that he should make it (the number of his days) a protection," with which Levy agrees, comparing vii. 12 (note), Isa. xxx. 2. But it is not probable.

after him] Clearly on earth, because of the next words, *under the sun*. Podechard translates *after him* as "afterwards" generally, explaining it wrongly as referring to his life on earth. See also iii. 22, note, vii. 14, ix. 3.

Ch. VII. 1—12. Better Things.

The question in vi. 12, "what is good," suggests to the author a list of "good" (i.e. "better" in our English idiom) things, which continues till *v.* 12. It is strange that he begins by stating first the best of all (*v.* 1 *a*), to be followed by more negative and serious things, but we have no right to alter the text. Death and mourning are better than life and merriment (*vv.* 1—6 *a*). A judge's decision may be affected by oppression or by bribery (*vv.* 6 *b*, 7). Patience is better than impatience (*vv.* 8, 9). Therefore avoid querulous discontent (*v.* 10). Wisdom joined to money is respected, but of the two wisdom is better (*vv.* 11, 12).

7 A *good* name is better than precious ointment; and the
2 day of death than the day of one's birth. It is better to
go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of

1. *A* good *name is better than precious ointment*] Perhaps we may translate the *v.* "Better is name than nard, and the deathday than one's birthday."

name] Without further epithet in the sense of good name or reputation, as in Zeph. iii. 19; Prov. xxii. 1. Compare "a new name" in Rev. ii. 17, on which Charles writes (vol. ii. p. 391), "The name stands for the man and all therein implied—his personality. For him that overcometh this personality is so transformed, developed and enriched that it is in effect a new personality, which none knoweth save God and the man himself."

precious ointment] The liquid perfumed oil used in the East on all joyful occasions ix. 8; Amos vi. 6; Ps. xlv. 7; Cant. i. 3, μύρον εὐῶδες (Symm.). Cf. 2 Sam. xii. 20. So *The Story of Ahikar* in the Syriac (A. II. 49), "Better is a good name than much beauty: because a good name standeth for aye, but beauty wanes and wastes away."

and the day of death than the day of one's birth] Levy explains this: The day of death on which one leaves a good name behind is better than the day of birth, when one does not know if he will gain it. But the meaning is wider than that. Qoh. here gives way to the feeling of despondency that sometimes overtakes him, cf. iv. 2. We cannot expect him to look at either life or death with the eyes of a Christian.

the day of one's birth] The Hebrew is "of his birth" although no person has been actually mentioned. But he is readily suggested, and McN.'s and Dr.'s emendations are not necessary. Pod., accepting the latter's emendation (*hulledeth* for *hiwwāldŏ*), thinks it is "the birthday," kept year by year: "mieux vaut faire un jour de deuil à l'occasion d'un décès, qu'un jour de fête à l'anniversaire d'une naissance." But this infringes on the next verse.

2. Qoh. in *v.* 1, spoke of one's own death, here of that of others. As regards the effect upon one's own life he says that to mourn with others is more helpful than to rejoice with them. Compare Luke vi. 25. There is no real opposition to ii. 24 and similar sayings; they and this are alike true, neither excluding the other. Therefore it is not necessary with Pod. to attribute the verse to the *Chākām*.

the house of mourning] Mourning lasted seven days (Gen. l. 10; Ecclus. xxii. 12; Judith xvi. 24); when friends came to mourn and partake of food in sacramental fashion (Jer. xvi. 7). For the thought compare the Arabic of *Ahikar*, II. 48: "O my son! the man who hath no rest, his death were better than his life; and the sound of weeping is better than the sound of singing; for

feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: 3 for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made [1]glad. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; 4 but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better 5 to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the

[1] Or, *better*

sorrow and weeping, if the fear of God be in them, are better than the sound of singing and rejoicing." The Syriac of the same verse however says, "better is the voice of wailing *in the ears of a fool* than music and joy."

the house of feasting] A marriage feast also lasted seven days, Gen. xxix. 27. So also, in Talmudic times at least, the week from birth to circumcision was a time of banqueting and illumination (Krauss, *Talmudische Archäologie*, II. 11).

for that] i.e. death, inferred from the first clause. To be reminded of one's own death is advantageous.

all men] Better, "every man," iii. 13, note.

and the living] Who visits the house of mourning. While there is life there is time to learn.

will lay it to his heart] ix. 1. The phrase in Ecclus. l. 28 is almost the same. See too 2 Sam. xiii. 33 and for the thought Ps. xc. 12. The LXX points the moral still more clearly by reading "will lay *good* to his heart."

3. The same thought continued. Vexation is better than laughter, for sadness of face is the heart's weal; *τὰ παθήματα μαθήματα* (Herod. i. 207), compare Job xxxiii. 19—33: "The 'Penseroso' is after all a character of a nobler stamp than the 'Allegro'" (Plumptre).

Sorrow] i. 18 (note, "grief").

the sadness of the countenance] Neh. ii. 2.

the heart is made glad] This is the right translation. Judg. xix. 6, 9, xviii. 20; Ruth iii. 7; 1 K. xxi. 7 and see ch. ix. 7, where the adjective of the same root is translated "merry." But the gladness intended must be moral, the result of conscientious thought.

4. The statement of *vv.* 2, 3 is borne out by experience. The mind of the wise is in the house of mourning, they find their interest there. For "sorrow penetrates the heart, draws the thought upwards, purifies, transforms" (Del.). Observe that no mere materialist could have said this. The fool's interest, on the contrary, lies where he can find pleasure. Like goes to like and draws sustenance therefrom.

5. From seeing Qoh. passes to hearing. It is better to be in the school of the wise than to be one who attends scenes of folly.

rebuke] Prov. xiii. 1, 8; xvii. 10.

than for a man to hear] Literally, "than a man who hears," the phrase emphasising the distinction between the two persons.

6 song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns under a
pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity.
7 [1]Surely extortion maketh a wise man foolish; and a gift
8 destroyeth the understanding. Better is the end of a

[1] Or, *For*

the song of fools] Amos vi. 5 where feasters are described as trilling out the notes of their songs. Drinking songs are not elevating.

6 *a*. The statement of *v*. 5 is confirmed by the noise, brevity and uselessness of fools' mirth. It is like thorns (*ṣîrîm*) lighted under a cooking pot (*ṣîr*). The paronomasia cannot be reproduced in English, though "nettles" and "kettle" have been suggested. For, as Del. points out, old nettles pulled in the end of summer crackle like thorns. The same figure occurs in Ps. lviii. 9, cxviii. 12.

6 *b*. *this also is vanity*] Literally, "And this also is vanity," the exact phrase being unique. (1) Del. and Plu. understand *this* to refer to the laughter of fools, a needless statement. (2) Hence many refer it to the reproof of the wise (*v*. 5 *a*)—that, the author would say, is also useless and he explains his reason for saying so in *v*. 7. (3) McN. and Pod. think it unintelligible and a late gloss. (4) We may however follow the Sinaitic manuscript of the LXX and join it to *v*. 7. Similarly in v. 10 (15), "and this also" begins, not ends, a statement. Thus here we read, "And this also is vanity, that oppression," etc.

7. A grievous example of "vanity"—oppression on the one hand, or bribery on the other, will ruin the wise in their discharge of duty.

Surely] As a translation the margin "For" is better, but if, as is probable, the verse goes with *v*. 6 *b*, "that" is right.

extortion] The A.V. has "oppression." It is the external force brought upon the wise in his work of judging persons, or deciding cases of casuistry. Or it may be the gain to the judge brought by extortion (Lev. vi. 4 [v. 23]). But this interpretation places the wise, in his capacity of judge, in a very odious light.

maketh . . . foolish] Or "mad" (ii. 2).

and a gift destroyeth the understanding] A gift, i.e. a bribe. Compare Prov. xv. 27, and, for the thought, Ex. xxiii. 8; Deut. xvi. 19.

understanding] Lit. "heart." The Hebraist will notice the omission (in the best MSS.) of the definite article after *'eth*, as in iii. 15, where see note. (1) Its absence just permits the translation "and destroyeth a heart of gift" (cf. Targ.), i.e. a heart magnificently endowed by God. Compare the LXX καρδίαν εὐγενείας (or εὐτονίας) αὐτοῦ. (2) Another suggestion (by Grätz and adopted by Dr. in Kittel) is more attractive, to read *m^ethūnim* ("deliberate") instead of *mattānah* (*gift*), translating, "and destroyeth

thing than the beginning thereof: *and* the patient in spirit
is better than the proud in spirit. Be not hasty in thy 9
spirit to be [1]angry: for [2]anger resteth in the bosom of
fools. Say not thou, What is the cause that the former 10
days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire

[1] Or, *vexed* [2] Or, *vexation*

the understanding of the deliberate." The word occurs in the *Ethics of the Fathers* (I. 1), "be deliberate in judgment." The Midrash, *Eccles. Rabba*, on our verse so far confirms this that it says that the written text (in contrast to the text read aloud) is *mᵉthūnah*, and connects it with *māthūn*, "deliberate."

The above seems to be the best explanation of the verse. It must be confessed however, that most commentators, translating the first word by "for," think it has no connexion with *v.* 6, and believe it to be only the second half of a sentence, of which the first and now lost part was something like Prov. xvi. 8: "Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues with injustice," *for extortion*, etc. Even so it is rather lame. The second half of *v.* 6 is then made a mere gloss.

8, 9. The position of *v.* 8 suggests that the author is still thinking of the judge, and warns him that the end of an argument is better than the beginning, and that he who is patient (in hearing it) is better than the arrogant (who jumps to conclusions). Further (*v.* 9) he warns in the same strain against hasty anger, which is only fit for fools.

8. *the end*] So x. 13, where, curiously, it also refers to speech.

of a thing] Symm. is preferable, "the end of a word." The LXX says "of words," but the plural is probably due to a reduplication of the first letter of the next word. The Vulg. has *finis orationis*.

the patient in spirit] Lit. "long in spirit." The phrase occurs here only. Contrast Prov. xiv. 29, "hasty of spirit" (lit. "short in spirit," nearly our "short-tempered").

the proud in spirit] Cf. Prov. xvi. 18; also Ps. ci. 5 ("an high look"); Prov. xvi. 5.

9. *Be not hasty*] See v. 2 (1) (note "rash").

to be angry . . . anger] Margin "vexed," "vexation," v. 17 (16); i. 18 (note "grief").

resteth] Contrast "wisdom resteth," Prov. xiv. 33.

10. Another mark of wisdom. It, unlike the common tendency of men, does not ask why former days are better than the present, but is content.

Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these] Many have seen here the old man complaining that the present is inferior to the days of his youth,

> Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
> Se puero, castigator censorque minorum.
> HORACE, *de Art. Poet.* 173 *sq.*

11 [1]wisely concerning this. Wisdom [2]is as good as an inheritance: yea, more excellent is it for them that see the

[1] Heb. *out of wisdom.*

[2] Or, *is good together with an inheritance: and profitable unto them &c.*

But the context has nothing to do with old age, and indeed the complaint that the golden past was better than the iron present is not peculiar to it. Qoh. in fact is wisely consistent in trying to dissuade his readers from placing the millennium in the past, and in bidding them make the most of the present.

Ne dicas meliores fuisse dies sub Moyse, et sub Christo, quam modo sunt. Nam et illo tempore plures fuerunt increduli, et dies eorum mali facti sunt, et nunc credentes multi reperiuntur, de quibus ait Salvator: Beatiores qui non viderunt, et crediderunt. (Jer.)

Pod. explains the verse quite differently. According to him the question requires the answer in the negative, and is virtually a negation, Do not say, the past was *not* better than the present, for wisdom says it was. The sages defend their opinion against Qoh.'s thought that things were as bad then as now (iii. 15). But this is very forced.

11, 12. Wisdom with enough to live on is good, and an advantage in the sight of all men. For though both wisdom and money give protection, yet the profit of knowledge is that wisdom keeps its owner alive.

11. *Wisdom is as good as an inheritance*] The margin (and A.V.) give the literal translation, "Wisdom is good together with an inheritance," and this makes excellent sense. For while possessions alone without wisdom bring no enjoyment (Lk. xii. 20), and wisdom without possessions is apt to be despised (ch. ix. 16), the union of the two is valuable. The R.V. has been defended insufficiently from the Heb. of Job ix. 26, xxxvii. 18; Ps. xxviii. 1. The thought may be compared with the *Ethics of the Fathers*, II. 2, "Excellent is Torah-study together with some worldly occupation." But 1 Tim. vi. 6, often compared, praises rather the union of piety with a contented and independent spirit. A jejune conjecture, half approved by Dr. in Kittel, gives "Wisdom is better than an inheritance" (*mi-nachalah* for *'im nachalah*). Compare Prov. xvi. 16.

yea, more excellent is it] This rather forced translation is due to the error in the preceding clause. Better simply "and an advantage" (vi. 8, note).

for them that see the sun] i.e. all living men (vi. 5, note). But even so what fresh statement do these words add to the preceding? They are mere tautology. Hence translate, "with regard to (i.e. 'in the opinion of') them that see the sun" (cf. Gen. xlv. 1, Heb.).

sun. For wisdom is a defence, even as money is a defence: 12
but the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom preserveth
the life of him that hath it. Consider the work of God: 13
for who can make that straight, which he hath made
crooked? In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the 14
day of adversity consider: God hath even made the one

So Levy, appealing to Aben Ezra, "for men honour him for his wealth." Cf. G.-K. § 119*u*.

12. *For wisdom is a defence, even as money is a defence*] The Heb. is very concise, and is explained in various ways, but the general meaning is clear, that both wisdom and money afford "shadow." For the figurative meaning, with reference to wisdom, see Ecclus. xiv. 27, and, with direct reference to God, Num. xiv. 9; Ps. xvii. 8, xci. 1.

but the excellency (lit. "profit," i. 3, note) *of knowledge is, that wisdom preserveth the life*] Rightly; compare Prov. iii. 16, 18; Ecclus. iv. 12. And so nearly Symm. The A.V. "giveth life" follows the LXX and Jer. For though the verb can mean "give life again," "re-animate" as in resurrection, it does not seem to mean actually "give life," save in Job xxxiii. 4. True religion does tend to a long life; cf. Baruch iii. 14, "Learn where is wisdom, where is strength, where is understanding; that thou mayest know also where is length of days, and life."

of him that hath it] v. 11 (10), note.

13, 14. God's work is unalterable, so enjoy the prosperity He gives, for, in fact, no fault can be found in Him.

13. *Consider the work of God*] So in viii. 17 Qoh. says that he has considered it, and it is too great for man to comprehend. Compare xi. 5.

for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?] Do not therefore worry further about it. For the two chief words, see i. 15, notes. This is better than the LXX, Vulg., Pesh., who translate "him...whom," see Job xix. 6 and even Ps. cxlvi. 9. In this case the thought would be: Submit to God, however He may have dealt with you.

14. *In the day of prosperity be joyful*] The sense is right, but *prosperity* (*tôbah*) is translated "goods" in v. 11, and *joyful* (*btôb*) is literally "in good." The thought is, Take and enjoy the happiness God gives. As Ecclus. xiv. 14 says, perhaps with reference to our verse, "Defraud not thyself of a good day."

and in the day of adversity consider] i.e. in contrast to hasty resolutions and actions. Consider God's methods with regard to good and evil events, as the author proceeds to show.

God hath even made the one side by side with the other] He has made prosperity and adversity correspond; one answers to the other. Both may therefore be expected.

side by side with the other, to the end that man should not find out any thing *that shall be* after him.

to the end (iii. 18, note, "because of") *that man should not find out any thing* that shall be *after him*] (1) The phrase *after him* is almost universally understood to refer to the man himself, the sentence then meaning, Both good and ill will happen in corresponding measure, that thus a man may not know what will be the future events in his lifetime (Pod.), or on earth after his death (Barton), or, possibly, "that God causes man to experience good and evil that he may pass through the whole school of life, and when he departs hence that nothing may be outstanding (in arrears) which he has not experienced" (Del.).

(2) But though the phrase *after him* refers to the man in iii. 22, vi. 12, yet in itself it must have been far too common to permit us to limit it to such a reference. Hence it is permissible to believe that Symm. and Rashi are right in referring it to God, and understanding it, "that man may find no fault with Him"[1]. This does not imply that Symm. translated the last word in the Hebrew (*m'ûmah*, "any thing") as though it were (*m'ûm*, "fault," Job xxxi. 7) as Pod. asserts, but that man should not be able to find anything superior to, or behind, God and His method of dealing with man. This gives excellent sense, and agrees with the thought of viii. 17. God's dealings are beyond man's comprehension, but man can at least understand that God works equitably, and that there is no fault in Him. So the *Siphrê* says (§ 307, beginning), "you must not criticise His methods" (*'ên lhavhêv 'achav middôthâw*), and as Ibn Yachya († 1539) says, "that man should not be able to find out in God anything of injustice or violence." For *vv.* 13, 14, compare the noble Stoic Hymn of Cleanthes to Zeus (331—232 B.C.) which immediately follows the passage quoted in Introd. p. xxxii:

> Nay, but thou knowest to make crooked straight:
> Chaos to thee is order: in thine eyes
> The unloved is lovely, who didst harmonise
> Things evil with things good, that there should be
> One Word through all things everlastingly.

(Dr James Adam's translation in R. D. Hicks' *Stoic and Epicurean*, 1910, p. 15.)

15—18. An example of the strangeness of God's actions (*vv.* 13, 14) in which, for all that, there is no real error. A righteous man dies, and a wicked man lives on (*v.* 15). The cause of the former case—beware of it—may be undue scrupulosity about the com-

[1] So in the Old Syriac (Sin. and Cur.) of Luke xxiii. 14 the translation of "I found no fault in" is literally "and I found nothing after." Probably the phrase is simply an Aramaism. Compare the Introd. p. l.

All this have I seen in the days of my vanity: there is 15
a righteous man that perisheth in his righteousness, and
there is a wicked man that prolongeth *his life* in his evil-
doing. Be not righteous over much; neither make thyself 16
over wise: why shouldest thou destroy thyself? Be not 17

mands of the Law (*v.* 16). Then, instead of speaking of the cause of the latter, he says that, if much wickedness is indulged in, it will probably shorten life. But this too he puts in the form of advice; Do not be very wicked (*v.* 17). He then concludes: Notwithstanding, do not separate yourself from others; mix freely with both righteous and wicked. For he that fears God will succeed, having done his duty by both (*v.* 18).

15. Del. reminds us that the I-sections begin again here; see *v.* 23. Qoh. here points out from his own observation the difficulty of believing in the justice of Providence. The righteous may expect a long life (cf. Deut. iv. 40); the wicked ought to die soon (cf. Ps. lv. 23). But this is not always true. Qoh.'s problem is nearly that of Ps. lxxiii.

All this] Defined as two complementary facts in the next clause. Compare ii. 24.

have I seen] The last example of this phrase was in vi. 1. It is resumed in viii. 9, where see note.

in the days of my vanity] vi. 12, note. His past years seemed fleeting and worthless.

in his righteousness...in his evil-doing] Each was still *in* his chosen part; there had been no change to warrant the unexpected fate. Thus only the *nuance* of *in*, though not the translation, is "in spite of."

16. Yet the cause of the first case can be seen, and God's work is justified (*v.* 14). Do not imitate that cause. Be not exceedingly righteous, or make thyself excessively wise. Why shouldest thou become stupid?

The verse in itself might mean, Do not be too punctilious about justice in trying others, or be too subtle in the casuistry of the law-court for them. But *v.* 17 suggests that it is purely a personal matter. The two verses in their context lend no support to the common interpretation, that they encourage a man to walk in the *via media* of being neither godly nor wicked.

why shouldest thou destroy thyself?] The verb is in the Hithpael voice which elsewhere (four times) means "be astonished," the R.V. applying to it the meaning of the simple (Qal) voice. But, as Pod. points out, in the Targ. of 1 Sam. xxi. 14 it represents "and behaved as a madman" in the original. So here it may be "why shouldest thou lose thy senses?" A morbid scrupulosity often leads to mania. So the LXX, *μή ποτε ἐκπλαγῇς*, Vulg., *ne obstupescas*.

17. For the connexion see above on *vv.* 15—18. There is there-

over much wicked, neither be thou foolish: why shouldest
18 thou die before thy time? It is good that thou shouldest
take hold of this; yea, also from that withdraw not thine
hand: for he that feareth God shall come forth of them all.

fore no question of Qoh.'s indirectly permitting a little sin, though he says in *v.* 20 that some sin is in fact inevitable. Observe also, that, probably by a subconscious shrinking from apparent encouragement to sin, he avoids the word "sin" (*techeta'*) here. For the word *wicked* (*tirsha'*) stands in more direct contrast to *righteous* (*v.* 16), and perhaps means the wilful rejection of the many regulations of the Law. Do not cast off its restraints too far (so Del.).

18. See above on *vv.* 15—18.

(1) Commentators generally refer *this*...*that* to righteousness and wickedness (*vv.* 16, 17). Our verse is then supposed to advocate the *via media* between excess in either direction. But it is no negative that Qoh. is bidding his readers follow; he is urging active participation in both, and it is impossible that he meant participation in wickedness (the thought of ii. 3 is quite different).

(2) Hence others refer the words to the two precepts of *vv.* 16, 17—Cling to the precept, Do not be very righteous; do not be slack in obeying the precept, Do not be very wicked. But such advice seems very unnecessary.

(3) Jer. is right in seeing that the reference is to the two persons, the righteous and the wicked of *v.* 15, around whom *vv.* 16, 17 have revolved, but he understands it of helping each. Perhaps we may enlarge his explanation and say that Qoh. means, See much of one and do not withdraw from the other, for you must live in the world, as St Paul says (1 Cor. v. 10).

(4) Plu. has an attractive suggestion that *this* and *that* refer, as in xi. 6, to opportunities in general. But there is no hint of these in the present context.

withdraw not thine hand] xi. 6.

shall come forth of them all] There is no *of* or "from" in the Hebrew, and the verb is very common in the Mishna in the sense of a man fulfilling an obligation (e.g. *Berakoth*, II. 1), literally going out free as regards a certain duty, because he has fulfilled it. So here, he that fears God will come out free and triumphant as regards both sides of his responsibilities, those towards the righteous and those towards the wicked. For the thought compare John x. 9, where our Lord says that the sheep that has entered by the Door will find pasture both within and without the fold.

19. A gloss, no doubt originally to *v.* 12. It completely interrupts the connexion here. McN. attributes it to the *Chākām*, and this may be the case, if that person ever existed, which is more than doubtful.

Wisdom is a strength to the wise man more than ten 19
rulers which are in a city. [1]Surely there is not a righteous 20
man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not. Also 21
[2]take not heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou
hear thy servant curse thee: for oftentimes also thine 22
own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed
others.

[1] Or, *For* [2] Heb. *give not thine heart.*

is a strength] Better than "strengtheneth" (A.V.), for the verb seems never to have a transitive force (not even in Ps. lxviii. 28). Compare Prov. xxiv. 5, "a wise man is in strength."

ten rulers (ii. 19, note, "have rule") *which are in a city*] The comparison is with the committee of ten of the most prominent inhabitants who often managed Hellenistic towns (see Schürer, II. 172, E.T. II. i. 145, describing Tiberias). The author lived in Greek times. The verse means, Wisdom (i.e. the knowledge and service of God) is stronger than the skill and experience of heathen organisations. A somewhat similar comparison occurs in Ecclus. xxxvii. 14, where we read that a man's soul will sometimes tell him more than seven astrologers (see Box there in Charles).

20—22. A reason for the advice in *v.* 18 to mix freely with good and bad, for it is impossible to find anyone who, in fact, does not sin. You sin yourself.

20. *Surely*] The margin and A.V. are better, "For." The R.V. text presupposes that *v.* 19 is in its right place, the (very forced) meaning then being, Do not be disheartened even if your wisdom sometimes fails; every one sins sometimes.

there is not a righteous man] This does not bring out the right emphasis: "For, as for man—there is none righteous," etc.

that doeth good, and sinneth not] The words recall, and doubtless were intended to recall, Solomon's prayer, 1 K. viii. 46.

21, 22. Do not expect perfection in other people, or pay attention to everything that is said lest you hear your servant cursing you (*v.* 21). After all, you know well that you have often said much the same (*v.* 22).

21. *thy servant*] Who not only knows your weaknesses but is in your power to punish. It is often well to turn a deaf ear.

curse] Abuse and oaths are even more frequent in the East than in the West. Lev. xix. 14; 2 Sam. xvi. 5.

22. *thine own heart knoweth*] For *YD'* (*knoweth*) the LXX read *YR'* "is evil" or "does evil" (the difference is only that of ד and ר, i.e. a "tittle," Matt. v. 18). But the Masoretic text is far simpler.

23 All this have I [1]proved in wisdom: I said, I will be
24 wise; but it was far from me. That which [2]is is far off,

[1] Or, *tried by* [2] Or, *hath been*

23—29. These verses are in all probability closely connected, and proceed from one and the same hand. Qoh. recounts another result of his inquiry. He states (*vv.* 23, 24) that the subject of it is very hard, and defines it (*v.* 25) in general terms, viz. to know that wickedness is folly, and foolishness is madness. He exemplifies the meaning of this (*v.* 26) by the extreme case of the harlot or adulteress. Then (*vv.* 27—29) he comes to the actual result, saying (*v.* 27) that he has used the painstaking method of induction from observed facts. But the result is largely negative (*v.* 28), he has found only one man worthy of the name out of a thousand, and not one woman. Yet (*v.* 29) he has at least found this out, that man's present condition is not the fault of God, for God made man upright. It was man's own fault, for men sought out various contrivances, instead (it is implied) of seeking Him.

Observe (1) that the argument is connected, and will not bear breaking up into the work of two or three different authors, and (2) that the conclusion is very fine. It is humbling, no doubt, to man's self-complacency, but it forms a good basis for a fuller, and more direct, faith on God.

Has this section (*vv.* 23—29) any connexion with the preceding (*vv.* 20—22)? Probably not originally. It was an independent and self-contained "note" by Qoh. But perhaps it was by no mere accident that he set it here. For it carries on the thought of *vv.* 20—22 at least in this: Wickedness is indeed strong, especially in the case of a wicked woman; I have rarely found a good man, and never a good woman. But this is not the fault of God.

23. *All this*] As this section stands *this* refers to the earlier part of the chapter, especially to those verses which speak of God's unalterable work, strange though it may appear (*vv.* 13, 14). Sometimes, no doubt, reasons can be seen (*vv.* 16, 17) but only sometimes.

have I proved] ii. 1, note. I have tested it all by such wisdom as I possess, for I made up my mind to become a really wise man.

but it was far from me] So Job xxviii. 12—22, where eventually the same conclusion is reached (*v.* 28) as in our book (xii. 13). But until that is discovered the inquirer "must suffer the pangs of Tantalus in his thirst after wisdom" (Wild.).

it] Either wisdom, or perhaps the discovery of it.

24. The verse justifies *v.* 23 *b*. Wisdom in general is far from me because each single event passes comprehension. See iii. 11.

That which is] The translators may have intended "each present event," or, and more probably, "each thing in its real nature." This is tempting, because, as Wisd. vii. 17, says, αὐτὸς (i.e. ὁ θεὸς) γάρ μοι ἔδωκεν τῶν ὄντων γνῶσιν ἀψευδῆ. But the phrase is so common

and exceeding deep; who can find it out? I turned about, 25
and my heart *was set* to know and to search out, and to
seek wisdom and the reason *of things*, and to know [1]that

[1] Or, *the wickedness of folly, and foolishness* which is *madness*

in Ecclesiastes of that which has been (i. 9 and often) that a metaphysical sense cannot be attributed to it here. The margin, that which "hath been" must be accepted.

is far off] Contrast the Law in its practical demands (Deut. xxx. 11), and also the Gospel (Rom. x. 6—8). See also Baruch iii. 14—23, 29—31.

and exceeding deep] Literally, "deep, deep." Other examples of this Hebrew idiom are 1 Sam. ii. 3; Prov. xx. 14. Every event, however simple it appears, is too deep for anyone to fathom.

25. Investigation teaches him at least this, that wickedness is folly and foolishness is madness.

I turned about] ii. 20, note.

and my heart was set *to know and to search out* (i. 13, note)] The translation is right, though it is against the accents, which require, "I turned about, and my heart, to know," etc., in which case the phrase "and my heart" was added by the author as an afterthought. An easy emendation taken from ii. 1 and found in the Vulg. and the Targ. is "in my heart." In any case the phrase adds to the vigour and sincerity of Qoh.'s action. Dr. in Kittel, proposes "and I set my heart" (i. 17, cf. 13), but this is unnecessary. The verse begins in the A.V. "I applied mine heart to know" which is an inexact paraphrase.

to know] i.e. the general result is stated first, and the method afterwards. But the phrase has doubtless crept in from the next line, and should be omitted here.

and to seek] A slight change in the Heb. indicates "even seeking."

wisdom and the reason of things] The word translated *reason* occurs only in *v.* 27 ("account"), ix. 10 ("device"), see also *v.* 29, notes. But it is common in Neo-Heb. and Aram. in the meaning of "calculation," and "account" or "sum," and "business method." Here the first predominates, and may be paraphrased as "the *rationale* of things." Jer. on *v.* 27 says of it, "*ESEBON, quod omnes voce consona* λογισμόν *transtulerunt, secundum Hebraei sermonis ambiguitatem, et* numerum *possumus, et* summam, et rationem, *et* cogitationem *dicere.*"

and to know that wickedness is folly (Ps. xlix. 13)] The Heb. construction is slightly ambiguous, the phrase being literally, "and to know wickedness folly." Hence the margin and A.V. "the wickedness of folly." But the idiom is the same as in Ps. cix. 4, "I (am) prayer," and cxx. 7, "I (am for) peace," where "I" and "prayer" or "peace" are regarded as co-ordinate and co-extensive, to be weakly paraphrased by, "I am all prayer," and, "I am

wickedness is folly, and that foolishness is madness:
26 and I find a thing more bitter than death, *even* the woman
[1]whose heart is snares and nets, *and* her hands *as* bands:

[1] Or, *who is a snare, and her heart is* as *nets*

all peace." So here, Qoh. regards wickedness and folly as coterminous, which the R.V. sufficiently expresses. An easy emendation was to transpose the two words, and reading the second as "a wicked man" to translate with the Syriac Hexaplar "the folly of the wicked man," this being also as it seems, the original text of the LXX.

and that foolishness is madness] The A.V., "even of foolishness *and* madness," neglects the sudden introduction of the definite article before *foolishness* in the Heb. This calls attention to the fact that a new sub-clause is beginning.

foolishness] ii. 3 and i. 17, notes.

madness] i. 17, note. Levy (on *v.* 23) compares Diog. Laert. VII. 124, *πάντας δὲ τοὺς ἄφρονας μαίνεσθαι.*

26. Qoh. gives a concrete example of the result of his search. The combination of folly and wickedness is seen in the harlot or adulteress. For, as he is plainly using the terms of the description in Prov. v. 3—6, vii. 5—27, and carefully defines the woman as identical with snares and nets—one whom he that pleaseth God escapes—it is impossible to see in this verse a diatribe against woman in general. See above on *vv.* 23—29.

and I find] The participle (*môtzĕ'*), so that a Hebrew teacher was justified in saying to his Christian pupil on his marriage, may she be *mātzā'* (Prov. xviii. 22) and not *môtzĕ'* (Eccles. vii. 26). See also the Talmud (T.B. *Yebamoth*, 63 *b*, and *Berakoth*, 8 *a*).

a thing more bitter] The word is used of the harlot in Prov. v. 4. The addition of *a thing* to the A.V. is made because *bitter* is in the masculine.

whose heart is] So also the A.V., but the Heb. is so condensed that the margin must be right, "who is. . . and her heart is."

snares] The sing. of the precise form written here occurs only in Prov. xii. 12, and the plur. here only, and apparently in an intensive sense, not to be reproduced in Eng. The woman is wholly a snare (see *v.* 25, note "wickedness is folly"). The verb is used in Prov. vi. 26 of the adulteress. A very similar substantive occurs in ch. ix. 12.

and nets] This also is in the plur. and for the same reason. Both however may be in the plur. in order to express the idea of snare added to snare, and net to net, in order to prevent any chance of the game slipping through. For the combination of the two roots see Micah vii. 2, and compare Ezek. xxxii. 3.

and *her hands* as *bands*] Her embraces are fetters. Contrast Judg. xv. 14; compare Prov. vii. 22.

whoso pleaseth God shall escape from her; but the sinner
shall be taken by her. Behold, this have I found, saith 27
the Preacher, [1]*laying* one thing to another, to find out the
account: which my soul still seeketh, but I have not 28
found: one man among a thousand have I found; but a

[1] Or, weighing *one thing after another, to find out the reason*

whoso pleaseth God] See ii. 26, note, "For to the man that pleaseth him." Observe that there is no question here of retribution in the ordinary sense of the word. Though God is evidently regarded as a moral Governor the escape is attributed not to His action, but to the legitimate and, so to say, natural result of the man's previous life. And so in the contrary case of *the sinner*. See also ii. 26*b*; Prov. v. 22; compare xxii. 14.

27—29. The verses are difficult, for Qoh. seems to confess that his search after a reasonable explanation of things in general is a failure, and so speaks only of the result of his search as regards human beings. He confesses that though he sought a proper reckoning by inductive methods (*v* 27), and sought it again and again (*v*. 28 *a*), yet he has failed to find it as a whole (*v*. 28 *a*). Out of a thousand people he has found but one man, and not one woman (*v*. 28 *b*). But the fault does not lie with God, but with man (*v*. 29).

27. *Behold, this*] Namely, what he is about to state.

saith the Preacher] According to the Masoretic text the verb is in the fem., but probably the "h," which is also the sign of the definite article, has been wrongly attached to the preceding word, the verb. As emended it is like xii. 8. See i. 1, note.

laying *one thing to another*] He carefully studies the subject by induction. *one...another* are in the feminine, and in Jer.'s commentary are translated *unam ad unam*, as though Qoh.'s search was to find one good woman. But, as Jer. implies, there is no neuter in Heb., and the fem. often represents it (e.g. Ps. xxvii. 4) as is doubtless the case here.

to find out the account] See *v*. 25, note, "the reason *of things*."

28 *a*. *which my soul still seeketh, but I have not found*] The *which* probably refers to the immediate antecedent, the *account*, or reasonable comprehension of things. Qoh. says he has sought this again and again, but has not found it. So the LXX, Vulg., Jer. In spite of the statement being rather more prosaic than is usual with Qoheleth the translation may be accepted.

Many commentators however sharply separate *which* from the preceding verse, and explain, That which my soul hath sought again and again, and I have not found, is this, namely, that though I found one man...yet I have not found one woman. But this is a very clumsy way of expressing a negative result.

28 *b*. *one man*] We should have expected *'ish, vir*, which represents not only male in contrast to female, but also a man as courageous

29 woman among all those have I not found. Behold, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.

or as of good standing. But Qoh. says *'ādām*, which is more often the generic name, a human being (as in *v.* 29). Yet as it was the first term applied to man before a woman existed (Gen. ii. 18), it can be used of him in contrast to her (Gen. ii. 22, 23, 25, iii. 8, 12, 20 †). It is not necessarily a Graecism, i.e. ἄνθρωπος = ἀνήρ.

a thousand] A round number, Job ix. 3; Ecclus. vi. 6. It is uncertain whether only men are included, in which case the women will make another thousand, or both men and women are intended. The words in the next clause *among all those* suggest the latter.

but a woman among all those have I not found] Qoheleth is not polite to the sex. But what is his reason? While it is probably true that woman as such is inferior to man, not only in physique (which is undeniable) but also in intellect (which ultimately depends upon physique), is she inferior in the moral sphere, which alone Qoh. is considering? This is not our experience to-day. Yet Gen. iii., with which Qoh. appears to have been acquainted (*vide supra*, note, *one man*), implies a greater moral weakness on her part than on the man's—or the temptation would not have been offered to her first—and her moral inferiority appears to be presupposed by all non-Christian peoples. Even Jer., who owed much to the ministration and friendship of women, not only quotes Virgil's *varium et mutabile semper Femina* (*Æn.* IV. 569) but adds St Paul's description of certain "silly women" as "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth," as though it were a true description of women in general. Perhaps the dependence of women upon men has stunted their moral growth, and in proportion as under the inspiration of Christianity they become less dependent so they will increase in moral power. Still, Qoh. must have been unfortunate in the data on which he based his induction.

29. Yet, after all, Qoh. says, he has come to one positive conclusion, and one that seems almost to contradict the gloomy statement of *v.* 28, viz., that the failure of man is not the fault of God, but of his own waywardness.

Behold, this only] There is no parallel for *only* referring to more than one word (see Isa. xxvi. 13), or its position (lit. "Only, behold this") would justify us in interpreting it of the whole sentence.

upright] The abstract substantive occurs in xii. 10. The word is not found in Gen., to which Qoh. seems to refer, but is very common elsewhere of the morally upright (e.g. 1 Sam. xxix. 6).

but they] The pronoun is in the masc., and naturally refers to men, or rather mankind, in general. But an attempt has been made by Grätz and Levy, and favoured by Zap., to refer it to

Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the inter- 8
pretation of a thing? A man's wisdom maketh his face

women only, in accordance with the end of *v.* 28. The same masc. form is in fact used of Naomi and Ruth in Ruth i. 22 (the only exact parallel), but where, as in our verse, there is no hint of such a limitation, only an abuse of ingenuity can discover it.

have sought out many inventions] The phrase (*bikshū chishbŏnŏth rabbîm*) is clearly an allusion to "the *account* which my soul still *seeketh*" (*cheshbŏn. . . . bikshah*) in *vv.* 27, 28. In fact Qoh. seems to suggest, They took no trouble to seek the true *rationale* of God's works, but did give their minds to seeking contrivance after contrivance of their own devising. Such, we may presume, he would have called Cain's building a city, when driven out from God's presence (Gen. iv. 17), and the various arts of civilisation, expecially among the Cainites (Gen. iv. 20—23); or, again, the tower of Babel (Gen. xi. 1—9). Men have always been seeking out contrivances wherewith to satisfy their immediate needs and pleasures, not considering the goal whither these might lead them, and regardless of God. The moral simplicity (ἁπλότης, 2 Cor. xi. 3) characteristic of man in his true nature has become the degeneracy of mere inventiveness (cf. Del.).

inventions] The exact word occurs in 2 Chr. xxvi. 15 only, where it is translated "engines." Thus usage (such as it is) forbids the acceptance of the Vulg., *ipse se infinitis miscuerit quaestionibus*. McN. attributes the verse to the *Chāsîd* who is rather shocked by *vv.* 27, 28. If so he was a singularly clever man, to enter so fully into the subject, and play upon the words of his predecessor.

Ch. VIII. **1—4**. The Wise Man in Relation to the King.

Wisdom gives a benignant expression to the countenance (*v.* 1). Obey the king even for conscience sake (*v.* 2). Be not hasty in resigning office, nor obstinate in doing wrong; the king is all-powerful (*vv.* 3, 4).

1. Introduction. In general wisdom gives insight and courteousness.

Who is as the wise man?] Aq.'s τίς ὧδε σοφός; is doubtless the original of the LXX which a copyist has debased into τίς οἶδεν σοφούς; This general question is followed by another, which limits the reference.

and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing?] He has insight into the meaning of each difficult matter brought before him. If the heathen wise men failed, Daniel himself did not (Dan. v. 15, 24–28). Christian teaching is even stronger (1 Cor. ii. 15; 1 John ii. 27).

a man's wisdom maketh his face to shine] The phrase *maketh his face to shine* is elsewhere used of God, connoting His graciousness (Num. vi. 25; Ps. lxvii. 1; cf. Ps. iv. 6). So here; wisdom produces

2 to shine, and the [1]hardness of his face is changed. I *counsel*

[1] Heb. *strength*.

kindliness of expression and evidence of willingness to assist. This is better than either gladness of countenance (cf. Job xxix. 24), or intellectual clarity of thought (cf. Ps. xix. 8, cxix. 130), or even Del.'s explanation, "that intellectual and ethical transfiguration of the countenance is meant, in which at once, even though it should not in itself be beautiful, we discover the educated man rising above the common rank" (see below).

and the hardness of his face is changed] True wisdom, the writer means, alters that harshness of countenance which repels others. The Heb. word (*'ōz*) translated *hardness* is a very common word for "strength" of every kind. There is no occasion here to translate "boldness" or "impudence" (with Del.), in accordance with the similar post-biblical expression *'azzûth pānîm*. Much less need we read *'az pānîm*, "he that is bold" or "impudent" as in Deut. xxviii. 50; Dan. viii. 23.

is changed] The last letter of the Heb. word is irregular, but there are parallels in 2 K. xxv. 29; Lam. iv. 1, and no alteration of any kind is required. See also Ecclus. xii. 18, xiii. 25 in the Heb. The LXX, rather ignorantly, misread the whole clause, and translated καὶ ἀναιδὴς προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ μισηθήσεται. With the sentiment in general Plu. compares:

> Adde, quod ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
> Emollit mores nec sinit esse feros.
>
> "To learn in truth the nobler arts of life,
> Makes manners gentle, rescues them from strife."
>
> Ovid, *Epp. ex Ponto*, II. ix. 47.

Del.'s summary is worth quoting, "Wisdom gives bright eyes to a man, a gentle countenance, a noble expression; it refines and dignifies his external appearance and his demeanour. If his external attitude has been rough, selfish and forward, it is changed into the very opposite." Cf. "My learning shines on my face" (*Lev. R.* on xv. 25).

2. Keep the king's command, remembering thine oath.

This seems to be the general meaning of the verse, but both text and construction are not certain.

I counsel thee] Both the R.V. and the A.V. supply a verb after *I*, following Symm. Most commentators suggest "I said" from iii. 18, where, it will be noticed, the same Heb. phrase occurs, which is translated there, "because of" and here "in regard of." But against such an addition of a verb is the phrase "in my heart" there. It is better to emend *I* (*'anî*) to the mark of the object (*'eth* before *command*). This is not generally represented in Greek (Aq.'s version is not recorded here), so that the LXX begins at once στόμα βασιλέως φύλαξον. And so the Targ. (as it seems), and

thee, Keep the king's command, and that in regard of the oath of God. Be not hasty to go out of his presence; 3

Pesh. The Vulg. reads *I* but turns the imperative into a participle, or perhaps a finite verb, *ego os regis observo*.

command] Literally "mouth," cf. 1 Sam. xv. 24 and often.

and that in regard of the oath of God] For *in regard of*, see iii. 18, note "because of."

The phrase gives a further (*and*) reason for obedience, viz. reference to the oath.

the oath of God] Elsewhere we find "the oath of the LORD" (Ex. xxii. 11; 2 Sam. xxi. 7; 1 K. ii. 43), but in all these passages the oath is taken before the God of Israel as such. But in speaking of an oath recognised by a heathen ruler *God* is used instead of LORD, 2 Chr. xxxvi. 13. Nehemiah's words, "and made them swear by God" (xiii. 25) are hardly an exception, in view of the semi-heathenism of those with whom he is dealing, and his own preference for the word God. Here *the oath of God* is the oath of obedience taken, either personally by each courtier, or, more probably, by the nation as such, to obey the king. Compare the covenant made with King David at Hebron (2 Sam. v. 3), and especially the oath of allegiance given by Zedekiah to Nebuchadrezzar (2 Chr. xxxvi. 13; Ezek. xvii. 13—19). It is noticeable that Darius III (Codomannus, 336—331 B.C.) imposed such an oath on the High Priest "not to bear arms against him" (Josephus, *Antt.* XI. viii. 3, § 318), and Ptolemy I (Soter, the son of Lagos, 322—283 B.C.), imposed oaths of fidelity to himself and his posterity upon the people of Jerusalem (*Antt.* XII. i. 1, § 8). But, in fact, the public installation of any ruler, accompanied as it always was by a religious ceremony, made obedience to him a religious duty on the part of all his subjects. And so St Paul writes, "Ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience sake" (Rom. xiii. 5). The verse therefore gives no hint as to the date of the writer beyond the (rather slight) implication that the king is not an Israelite.

3. Do not hastily renounce his service, nor continue in any practice that is evil in his sight. For he is all-powerful.

Be not hasty (Prov. xxviii. 22) *to go out* (for the Heb. construction see G.-K. § 120 *c*) *of his presence*] If, as Pod. thinks, the writer is referring to the visit of Jewish ambassadors to their suzerain, this means that they must not be hasty in leaving if they cannot gain their point at once. The wise man is patient. But if, as is more probable, the thought is of the general behaviour of Jewish courtiers to their heathen ruler, it is rather a warning either against falling away from him, or, more probably, against resigning office in pique (cf. x. 4).

Many commentators translate, "be not frightened," or, "be not confounded" (Job xxiii. 15) instead of *be not hasty*, and join it with the preceding verse. So McN. (p. 26), "But on account

persist not in an evil thing: for he doeth whatsoever
4 pleaseth him. Because the king's word *hath* power; and
5 who may say unto him, What doest thou? Whoso keepeth
the commandment shall know no evil thing; and a wise

of [thine] oath to God, be not frightened," cf. LXX, *καὶ περὶ λόγου ὅρκου θεοῦ μὴ σπουδάσῃς*. The next clause is rendered accordingly "Out of his presence shalt thou go." The passage is then interpreted as the advice of the *Chāsîd* not to yield to the king when his wishes are against true religion. But this is quite unnecessary, the R.V. giving excellent sense.

persist not in an evil thing] Probably, in any practice to which he is opposed, and which he will punish. But Del. and others think it refers to a conspiracy against the king. In any case it is useless to oppose him, for *he doeth whatsoever pleaseth him*. The absolutism of an eastern king brooks no permanent opposition. The wise man remembers this. Naturally, McN. attributes the clause to the *Chāsîd*, who continues his advice. Wild. curiously explains it as advice to withdraw from the king's presence if he is angry ("persist not at an ill word").

Of the last clause of the verse Plu. says: "The words paint a sovereignty such as Greek poets loved to hold up for men's abhorrence:

ἀλλ' ἡ τυραννὶς πολλά τ' ἄλλ' εὐδαιμονεῖ,
κἄξεστιν αὐτῇ δρᾶν λέγειν θ' ἃ βούλεται.

"The tyrant's might in much besides excels,
And it may do and say whate'er it wills."

SOPH. *Antig.* 507.

4. Explanatory of *v.* 3 end.

Because] Or "Forasmuch as." The same particle is translated "for" in vii. 2, and (though in a slightly different form) "seeing that" in ii. 16. The A.V. "where" is not so probable.

power] For the root, see ii. 19 (note, "shall he have rule"). This substantive occurs here and *v.* 8 † in Biblical Heb., and may be either abstract, as occasionally in Midrashic books, or, personal, "a ruler," as more often there and in the Talmud, and also in Ecclus. iv. 7. As it is probably abstract in *v.* 8 we may take it so here also.

and who may say unto him, What doest thou?] As though the king were God! See Job ix. 12; Isa. xlv. 9; Wisd. xii. 12.

5—8. Encouragement to the obedient (cf. *v.* 2) and to the wise (cf. *v.* 1). Do each thing in its time, for death comes.

5. *Whoso keepeth the commandment*] In *v.* 2 the writer enjoined keeping the charge of the king. Here his thought is chiefly of a greater King. Presumably the singular is used in a collective sense, as in Prov. vi. 23, xiii. 13.

shall know no evil thing] The A.V. is clearer, "shall feel"; i.e. he shall experience no ill (cf. Ezek. xxv. 14), and so the Vulgate.

man's heart discerneth time and judgement: for to every 6
[1]purpose there is a time and judgement; because the
[2]misery of man is great upon him: for he knoweth not 7
that which shall be; [3]for who can tell him how it shall

[1] Or, *matter* [2] Or, *evil*
[3] Or, *for* even *when it cometh to pass, who shall declare it unto him?*

The R.V. means that he shall countenance no evil (cf. Ps. ci. 4), e.g. any plot against the king.

and a wise man's heart (i.e. his intelligence, i. 13, note) *discerneth* (lit. "knows") *time and judgement*]He knows the best moment for speaking and acting, and the right decision to make. Vulg. *Tempus et responsionem cor sapientis intelligit.* Del. explains that he knows that God's time for deliverance and for judgement will come in due course, and so he is patient in bearing trials. But this explanation is due to a misunderstanding of *v.* 6. Perhaps however *judgement* both here and in the next verse means the right method in accordance with the nature of the particular thing to be done. See Isa. xxviii. 6.

6. Epexegetic of *v.* 5 *b*. Every matter has its own right time and the decision, or the method, that suits it—for indeed man is never free from anxieties.

for to every purpose] (iii. 1, note).

because the misery of man is great upon him] For *misery* the R.V. margin has, preferably, "evil." A difficult clause, but it apparently means that each thing requires a proper decision and the application to it of the method that suits it, and in fact man is never free from occasions in which this has to be exercised. For the phrase, see vi. 1. Another translation is "For the wickedness of the man (the tyrant king) is great upon him," i.e. God's judgement shall come on him in due course. But to call the king "the man" is strange in this context, and the generic use of the article is so common in Eccles. that this is preferable here.

7. The verse expands the thought of a man's anxiety—for he knows not what will happen, nor can any tell him how it will happen. The writer is thinking more and more of the coming of death. Observe that this stands in no contradiction to the knowledge of the wise man which is described in *v.* 5. Even he does not know the future, though he understands how to use each event in the best way. Cf. x. 14.

for who can tell him how it shall be?] Not only each future event, especially the great event of death, is hidden from a man, but also its manner.

Some commentators (e.g. Pod.) translate, "When it shall be," referring to *v.* 16, v. 1 (iv. 17), v. 4 (3), which gives excellent sense, but, as Del. points out, the sense there is always *quum* (a conjunction) not *quando* (adverbial).

8 be? There is no man that hath power over the [1]spirit
to retain the [1]spirit; neither hath he power over the day
of death; and there is no discharge [2]in *that* war: neither

[1] Or, *wind* [2] Or, *in battle*

The R.V. margin has "for *even* when it cometh to pass, who shall declare it unto him?" This is ingenious, but improbable in the context, which goes on to speak of the coming of death.

8. The great example of human ignorance and powerlessness, the day of death. As man has no supremacy over the wind so that he can restrain it, so has he none in the day of death, and there is no sending a substitute in that war, nor can wickedness deliver.

that hath power] This is a verbal adjective like vii. 19. In the next clause power is an abstract substantive, as in *v.* 4.

over the spirit] So also A.V. but R.V. margin "wind." It is almost impossible to decide which rendering is right. But the text (iii. 21) comes very near tautology in view of the rest of the verse. Probably the writer is thinking of the wind, whose governance is peculiar to God (Prov. xxx. 4). Contrast ch. xi. 5, note.

to retain] Better "to restrain," either to hold in watch and ward (1 Sam. vi. 10; Jer. xxxii. 3), or, better, to keep back (Ps. xl. 9; Gen. viii. 2; Ezek. xxxi. 15).

power over the day of death] This is better than the A.V. "power in," etc. The day of death cannot be controlled.

and there is no discharge in that *war*] The word translated *discharge* (*mishlachath*) occurs in Biblical Heb. only here and in Ps. lxxviii. 49, "a band" (margin, "Heb. *a sending*"). The generally accepted rendering of it is "dismissal" or "discharge" (*emissio*, Jer.), the meaning being that no furlough is granted or demobilisation possible. But this rendering is very uncertain, requiring the derivation of the form from the intensive or Piel voice of the root, which is often to "send away," "dismiss," "loose." It is much more naturally derived from the simple or Qal voice which means to "send," and so always in the masc. substantive *mishlach*. Symm. puts us on the right track, with his οὐδὲ ἔστι παρατάξασθαι εἰς πόλεμον, "neither is there any setting in array for war," the connotation being that of a general disposing his army against the foe. Hence perhaps the Targ. "and weapons of war do not help in the war." But it is simpler to take it merely "There is no sending in that war," i.e. you cannot send some one under you in your stead, no substitution is possible. The last clause has then a special force. The Midrash (*Eccles. Rabba, in loco*) then is right when it explains the phrase, "No man can say (to the angel of death) Lo, here is my son, or my servant, or one of my household servants, instead of me."

in that *war*] The margin "in battle" makes the article of the Heb. vocalisation generic. But it is somewhat of a platitude. For,

shall wickedness deliver him that is given to it. All this 9
have I seen, and applied my heart unto every work that
is done under the sun: [1]*there is* a time wherein one man
hath power over another [2]to his hurt.

And withal I saw the wicked buried, [3]and they came 10

[1] Or, *what time one man had &c.* [2] Or, *to his own hurt*

[3] Or, *who had come and gone away from the holy place, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done* Or, *and men came and went &c.*

of course, when the battle has begun (as it implies) one cannot get a discharge, or send a substitute. It is therefore preferable to identify the war with the war against death.

neither shall wickedness deliver] To send a substitute is selfishness, only a negative sin, but positive wickedness shall be equally ineffective.

him that is given to it] Lit. "its owner," see v. 11 (10), note.

9—15. A new subject. The righteous and the wicked are not suitably rewarded. Therefore enjoy life. The paragraph may be divided as follows: Sometimes a man exercises power to his own harm (*v.* 9). Wicked men may be buried honourably, and right-doers be exiled from the Temple and be forgotten (*v.* 10). Justice shall not fail at last (*vv.* 11—13, an addition by the editor). The wicked sometimes receive the reward due to the righteous, and *vice versâ*; therefore enjoy life while you can (*vv.* 14, 15).

9. Introduction. Qoh., when considering life, has seen, among other examples, one man tyrannising over another to his own hurt.

All this have I seen] The use of the word "hath power" makes it tempting to follow the R.V., and connect this verse with the preceding, but *have I seen* in Eccles., when used absolutely, seems always to introduce a subject, not to gather up that which has been already described (i. 14, note).

and applied my heart] i. 13, notes. For the Heb. construction, see G.-K. § 113 *z*.

there is *a time wherein one man hath power* (*v.* 4, note) *over another*] The margin, "what time one man had," etc., would be more suitable if the verse had referred to *vv* 1—8. But the text is right (Aq., Vulg.), and the clause is enlarged in *vv.* 11—13.

to his hurt] So LXX, Targ. Rather jejune, if not unnecessary in view of the next verse. The margin "to his own hurt" (Symm., Vulg.) is on a higher moral plane, yet not too high even for Qoh., especially if *vv.* 11—13 are by him.

10. The diverse treatment of the wicked and the righteous.

In this verse the Heb. of one word is certainly corrupt, and for other words plausible emendations readily suggest themselves, so that commentators differ a good deal in their explanation of it. See note at end of the verse.

And withal] It is not easy to understand why the Revisers

to the grave; and they that had done right went away from the holy place, and were forgotten in the city: this

inserted this archaism, for the A.V., "And so" is preferable. Still better is "And then." The Heb. phrase occurs in Esth. iv. 16 only ("and so"), but often in Aram.

I saw the wicked buried, and they came to the grave] The Heb. phrase for "*and they came* to the grave" is corrupt. For not only is its construction very forced, but the verb nowhere means "come to the grave" or "enter into rest," unless a word follows which expressly states this. So in Isa. lvii. 2, "he entereth into peace," the Heb. addition of "into peace" makes everything clear. And again, although it is used, when alone, of the sun setting, the verb is never used figuratively of persons coming to their journey's end. A favourite emendation (Dr. in Kittel) for "buried, and they came" is "brought to their graves" (*qbārîm mûbā'îm* for *qbûrîm wābā'ū*), but the Heb. then is harsh. It would be preferable to read *qbārîm yûbālū* "(who were) borne to their graves," see Job xxi. 32. This would satisfy the LXX *εἰς τάφους εἰσαχθέντας* at least as well.

Dr Burkitt attractively emends to *qôrbim*, "draw near," or *mqârbim*, "offer sacrifice," i.e. "I have seen wicked men at worship and they who have done so come in, and go off on their ways from the Holy Place and boast of it" (*vide infra*).

and they that had done right (the Hebraist may compare 2 K. vii. 9, xvii. 9) *went away*—the form suggests a solemn procession, cf. iv. 15 (note "walk"), but here the slow march of captives—*from the holy place* (the Temple which they loved), *and were forgotten in the city*] While the wicked were duly buried (contrast vi. 3) the godly marched off into captivity, and were forgotten. No wonder Qoh. adds his old refrain, *this also is vanity*. For the general thought, compare Job xxi. and Ps. lxxiii. 1—14. The margin offers two other translations after the word *buried*: (*a*) "who had come and gone away from," etc., and (*b*) "and men came and went," etc. They are so impossible that no more need be said about them.

It is true that with some additional slight emendations a passable sense is obtained, according to which the verse refers to the wicked only. Thus McN.'s translation is, "And then I saw wicked men buried, and they had come from a holy place (where they ought never to have been tolerated) [and] they used to go about and congratulate themselves in the city because they had so done," the "so" referring to the oppression they had exercised (*v.* 9). But it is unnecessary to make so many corrections, and the former explanation is better.

11—13. As in the midst of Job's complaint that the wicked prosper there comes a statement that God will eventually punish them (in the persons of their children, Job xxi. 19 *a*), so here, after the complaint of *vv.* 9—10 come *vv.* 11—13, assuring us that,

also is vanity. Because sentence against an evil work is 11
not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of
men is [1]fully set in them to do evil. Though a sinner do 12
evil an hundred times, and prolong his *days*, yet surely

[1] Or, *emboldened*

after all, it is better with the righteous than the wicked. The *vv.* may be treated as a quotation, or, better, as a parenthesis, if they are by Qoh. himself. But they perhaps form some of the strongest evidence for the existence of the *Chāsîd*, who added to the original work his own annotations, which he considered more orthodox and pious than some of Qoh.'s statements. Yet in style they are indistinguishable, and perhaps modern scholars do not allow enough for the variety in the character of thoughts jotted down at various intervals in a long life. See Introd. pp. xix—xxv.

11. Delay in judgement encourages the wicked.

Because] The usual explanation of this as the protasis to which *therefore* is the apodosis must be accepted, although there does not appear to be any other clear example of such a relationship (not even Gen. xlii. 21).

sentence (*pithgâm*)] This word occurs in Heb. in Esth. i. 20 †, and Ecclus. v. 11, viii. 9, and in Aram. in Ezra and Daniel. It is derived from the Old Persian or Achaemenian *patigāma* "message," found actually in middle Persian or Pahlavī, *patgām*.

against an evil work] i.e. a work that carries out evil. Contrast Isa. xxxii. 17, "the work of righteousness." All the ancient versions read "from them that do evil" (*mē'ôsêy* for *ma'aseh*), but *sentence* cannot mean "the exaction of punishment."

the heart...is fully set] Literally, "is full." In ix. 3 we read simply "is full of evil," but here the fulness has its issue in doing evil. Cf. Esth. vii. 5, lit., as the A.V. margin says, "whose heart hath filled him to do so." In Ex. xxxv. 35, on the contrary, "them hath He filled with wisdom of heart, to work," etc.

12. The general effect of *v.* 11 was to describe the folly of the wicked who presume because their punishment is delayed. This verse confirms that folly from another side. A man may sin a hundred times and grow old—it shall be well with them that fear God.

Though] This is hardly possible as a literal translation of the conjunction, which is the same as that at the beginning of *v.* 11, and resumes it. "Inasmuch as a sinner does," etc.

an hundred times (*m'ath*)] The best translation, although the Hebrew has only "a hundred." Some understand "a hundred years." The irregularity of the Heb. form has led to the supposition that the word should be altogether omitted, as a mistaken spelling of *and prolong*. The LXX had a word of somewhat similar sound in front of them, *mê'âz*, "from of old," which Dr. in Kittel prefers.

I know that it shall be well with them that fear God,
13 which fear before him: but it shall not be well with the
wicked, neither shall he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a
14 shadow; because he feareth not before God. There is a

and prolong his days] Observe that "days" is added, as "his life" in vii. 15. Contrast *v.* 13. Jer. understands it of God postponing His anger, and so also Rashi and Aben Ezra, but one cannot introduce the mention of God so suddenly.

yet surely] Rather "surely also," cf. iv. 14, "yea, even."

I know] Both words are emphatic.

which fear before him] The tautology can hardly be explained by saying that it means "which really do fear before him" (cf. 1 Tim. v. 3, χήρας τίμα τὰς ὄντως χήρας), and it is therefore better to translate "because they fear," etc. The sentence then shows that the favour bestowed is not arbitrary, but has a solid basis.

13. In direct contrast with the preceding, the wicked man shall not prosper and shall not live long. As a shadow shall he be who does not fear God. The teaching of the verse is that of Job v. 26, xv. 32 *sq.*, xx. 5—9, xxii. 16; Prov. x. 27. It is possible that Wisd. ii. 5, iv. 8, refer to it. See Introd. p. xxviii *sq.*

which are *as a shadow*] The phrase *as a shadow* is extremely difficult.

(1) To treat it (A.V., R.V.) as a further definition of *days* is most improbable, though the Targ. does so.

(2) Some commentators (e.g. Siegfried, Barton) translate, "shall not prolong his days like a shadow" lengthening in the evening, i.e. he shall not attain to the evening of life. In this case the common, but mistaken, interpretation of Cant. ii. 17, iv. 6, "until the evening breeze blows and the shadows lengthen," may be compared. But shadow is always an emblem of the transitoriness of life, e.g. vi. 12.

(3) Others (the Metzudoth David, Del., McN., Pod.) take "shall not prolong" as virtually meaning "shall shorten," and see in "as a shadow" a further definition of the shortness of the wicked man's life. But the phrase is an awkward appendage. The LXX may have intended this interpretation.

(4) It is preferable (with the Vulg., Hitzig, though the Heb. is still awkward, cf. 1 Chr. xxix. 15) to ignore the accentuation, and to understand the phrase as the predicate of the next clause—"as a shadow is he who feareth not before God." That the relative here regains (after *v.* 12) its normal force is no difficulty, for Heb. writers delight in modifying the meaning of the same term in consecutive verses. For the Heb. construction, see Gen. xxx. 33 *al.*

14. A return to the thought of *v.* 10. Some righteous men are treated as the wicked deserve to be, and *vice versâ*. For the thought

vanity which is done upon the earth; that there be righteous men, unto whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked; again, there be wicked men, to whom it happeneth according to the work of the righteous: I said that this also is vanity. Then I commended mirth, 15
because a man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry: [1]for that shall abide with him in his labour *all* the days of his life which God hath given him under the sun.

[1] Or, *and that this should accompany him*

of the verse compare Job ix. 22, xxi. 7; Ps. lxxiii. 3; Jer. xii. 1. See also ch. ii. 15.

a vanity which is done] Nowhere else, as it seems, does Qoh. so materialise "vanity."

unto whom it happeneth] The same phrase is translated in Esth. ix. 26, "had come unto them."

I said that this also is vanity] See ii. 15, but there seems to be no other case of the repetition in the same verse of the statement that a certain course of procedure is vanity. It is added here as a transition to the following advice.

15. There is nothing like enjoyment of material things, which can be found in all one's toil. The absence of the working of right and wrong in the world leads Qoh. to the same result as do his conclusions about the failure of wisdom (ii. 24), and of human efforts (iii. 12), the sameness of the destiny of man and of beast (iii. 22), the uncertainty of the results of toil (v. 17 (16)—19 (18)), the certainty of a death that ends all, at least as regards this world (vi. 3—6, ix. 7—10), and the knowledge that old age will come (xi. 8—xii. 1). Cf. Pod.

I commended] iv. 2 note, "praised."

to be merry] The word is not the same as in Gen. xliii. 34. It is only the infinitive of the substantive translated *mirth*.

for that shall abide with him] The margin is better, "and that this should accompany him." The verb is found in the same voice in Ecclus. xli. 12 †.

in his labour] See ii. 24. The A.V. "of his labour" (Vulg. *de labore suo*) suggests that his labour produces the fruit of happiness (as in ii. 10), i.e. "at the price of his labour." But *in* is more natural.

16, 17. It is fruitless to try to understand all that is done on earth, and to discover all the activity of God.

16. Protasis. When I tried to understand the travail of earth—for man toils incessantly.

16 When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to
see the [1]business that is done upon the earth: ([2]for also
there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his
17 eyes:) then I beheld all the work of God, that man cannot
find out the work that is done under the sun: because
however much a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall

[1] Or, *travail*

[2] Or, *how that neither by day nor by night do men see sleep with their eyes*

I applied mine heart to know wisdom] Here the object of the search, apparently as the result of seeing what was done. But perhaps wisdom is regarded as the means of seeing things properly (cf. i. 13).

the business] As in v. 3 (2). See i. 13 (note, "a sore travail").

(*for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes*)] The parenthesis is indubitable. But the translation is unnecessarily vague. For the subject is man, derived partly from *v.* 15, and especially from the connotation of *the business* mentioned in the preceding clause. Man is working incessantly day and night. Translate therefore "for also by day and night he seeth not sleep with his eyes." McN. takes the worker to be God, but Qoh. has no love for anthropomorphisms, and speaks of God's "work" not His "business."

seeth sleep with his eyes] So Terence, "*Somnum hercle ego hac nocte oculis non vidi meis*" (*Hauton Timorumenos*, III. i. 82), and Cicero, "*Nihil tamen eo consule mali factum est. Fuit enim mirifica vigilantia, qui suo toto consulatu somnum non viderit*" (*Epp. ad Divers.* VII. 30).

17. The apodosis to *v.* 16. No man however wise can understand God's work. See Job xi. 7—9; Rom. xi. 33.

then I beheld] The Heb. form is frequentative (cf. Driver, *Hebrew Tenses*, p. xvi).

all the work of God] The expression is parallel with that in *v.* 16, *the business*, etc., but comprises all the working of Providence on earth.

cannot find out the work] Symm. says, "even one work" (*οὐδὲ ἓν ἔργον*), but, however true this is, Qoh. did not say so.

because however much] This is a paraphrase, but it gives the sense fairly. The Vulgate improves on it, *quanto plus laboraverit ad quaerendum, tanto minus inveniat*. The expression contains two relatives (very literally, "in which which"), and is almost unique in Heb. (though Jonah i. 7, 8, 12, may be compared), but is identical with an Aram. idiom (see Onkelos, Gen vi. 3), meaning "since," "forasmuch as." So here, "forasmuch as the man (in question) may toil in searching, yet he cannot find out."

not find it; yea moreover, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it. For all this 9
I laid to my heart, even to explore all this; that the

think to know it] We should say, "purpose to know it" (see Ex. ii. 14), or "expect to" do so (see 2 Sam. xxi. 16).

Plu. quotes Hooker's words in illustration of the verse.

Dangerous it were for the feeble brain of man to wade far into the doings of the Most High; whom although to know be life, and joy to make mention of his name; yet our soundest knowledge is to know that we know him not as indeed he is, neither can know him: and our safest eloquence concerning him is our silence, when we confess without confession that his glory is inexplicable, his greatness above our capacity and reach. He is above, and we upon earth; therefore it behoveth our words to be wary and few. (*Eccles. Polity*, I. ii. 2.)

Ch. IX. 1—6.

A man knows not God's attitude towards him (*v.* 1). For ill happens to religious and irreligious alike—and then they join the dead (*vv.* 2, 3). And every one who is alive is better off than the dead, who have no more part here (*vv.* 4—6).

1. This verse begins a series of examples illustrating the truth set forth in viii. 17, that God's works and ways are beyond our comprehension. The righteous and their works are in God's hand, but no one knows God's feelings towards him. Men's future lies before them unknown.

For] Connecting the verse closely with the preceding.

all this] i.e. what follows. It is restated immediately afterwards, and expanded.

I laid to my heart] For consideration, as in vii. 2.

even to explore] Jer. approvingly quotes Symm., *ut ventilarem*, i.e. to winnow, sift out. The Vulg. has *ut curiose intelligerem*. The A.V. "even to declare" is archaic English, meaning "to make clear." Compare the title of Pilkington's Commentary on Haggai (1560) "Aggeus the Prophete, declared by a large Commentarye." Deut. i. 5 (A.V., R.V.) may be compared. See W. A. Wright, *Bible Word-Book*, *s.v.* The Heb. word of our verse occurs in iii. 18 (note, "prove"). Qoh. states the issue of his consideration, to examine, distinguish, and bring out clearly the nature of "all this."

Pesh. however, and, as it seems, the original text of the LXX, read "and my heart saw" (*wlibbî rā'āh* for *wlābûr*) which is accepted by most moderns in preference to the Masoretic text. But (1) it does not seem to be Qoh.'s style to repeat a word immediately ("*I laid to my heart;* and my heart saw"); (2) the change of construction to an infinitive is very characteristic of

righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God: whether it be love or hatred, man knoweth it
2 not; all is before them. All things come alike to all:

him. Grätz and a few critics emend to "to search out" (*wlāthûr* for *wlābûr*, see i. 13, ii. 3, vii. 25), but unnecessarily.

that the righteous, and the wise, and their works (an Aramaism, the Hebrew word occurring here only), *are in the hand of God*] For Him to do with as He will (Prov. xxi. 1; cf. xviii. 21 Heb.). Observe the firm faith of Qoh. in God. Siegfried unnecessarily denies him this verse.

whether it be love or hatred, man knoweth it not] He is unable to tell whether God's actions towards him, as experienced in the joys and the troubles of life, are due to God's love or to His hatred. For, as Qoh. has already said, and will say again, things happen to righteous and wicked alike which do not seem consistent with God's feelings towards each class:

Et inveni iustorum quidem opera in manu Dei esse, et tamen utrum amentur a Deo, an non, nunc eos scire non posse, et inter ambiguum fluctuare, utrum ad probationem sustineant quae sustinent, an ad supplicium. (Jer.)

all is before them] Assuming that the Heb. text is right (*vide infra*) the meaning is "all is in front of them" (*man* taken collectively) and they have to meet it as each portion comes. They know nothing about it, and are unable to prevent this or that. They must go through it as best they can.

An attractive explanation by Levy is that *them* refers to *God*, which is a plur. word in form, and occasionally takes a qualifying noun or verb in the plur., the plur. being here used to prevent identification with *man*. All is in front of, well known to, God. But although such a use of the plur. might be found in an early writing (Josh. xxiv 19; 2 Sam. vii. 23), or even on lips of common people, it is most improbable in a document written by a cultured Jew of the third century B.C.

An attractive and even probable suggestion has been made that the opening word of *v.* 2, *ha-kōl*, *all things*, should be read as *hebel*, "vanity," and made the closing word of our verse, which will then be "all before them is vanity." So the LXX, Symm., Vulg. and Pesh. This may mean either (1) "all in front of them," which they will experience, whether bad or good, is "vanity" (McN., Barton), or (2) "all in their estimation" (cf. ii. 26, note "to the man that pleaseth him") is "vanity" (Pod.)

2. Righteous and wicked are treated alike.

all things come alike to all] The Heb. is unusual, but must mean, "The all is like that which (comes) to the all." The paraphrase of the R V. is enough to show the difficulty of the construction, and the attractiveness of the emendation mentioned at the end of *v.* 1. This verse will then continue, "Inasmuch as there is to

there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good [1] and to the clean and to the unclean; to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; *and* he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath. This is an evil in all that is done under 3

[1] Some ancient versions read, *and to the evil; to the clean &c.*

all one event, to the righteous," etc. (reading *ba'asher* for *ka'asher*). Cf. Symm.'s paraphrase (mostly in Jer.), *propterea quod omnibus eveniunt similia* (ἅπαντα ὅμοια) *iusto et iniusto*, and Vulg., *eo quod universa aeque eveniant iusto et impio.*

one event] In ii. 14 (where see note) this is death, but here *v.* 1 suggests a more general meaning. See also iii. 19 (note, "that which befalleth").

to the good] Probably an interpolation due to *as is the good* further on in this verse. The LXX reads here τῷ ἀγαθῷ καὶ τῷ κακῷ (*to the good and to the evil*), which Dr. (in Kittel) prefers.

and to the clean and to the unclean] Observe Qoh.'s acceptance of the ceremonial laws, with the trouble thus implied in observing minutiae of ritual in the house and elsewhere.

to him that sacrificeth and to him that sacrificeth not] Qoh. evidently regarded the latter, who took no trouble to fulfil the Law of God, as on a lower plane than the former. There is no reason to suppose that he was thinking of the Essenes, who were excluded from offering their own sacrifices in the Temple (Jos. *Antt.* XVIII. i. 5, § 19).

as is the good, so is the sinner] The earlier contrast, *the righteous, the wicked*, referred to the open distinction, but this to the inner character.

and *he that sweareth*] Observe that there is no *as* at the beginning. Qoh. changes his expression for euphony. We must translate "*is* as he that feareth an oath."

as he that feareth an oath] I. It has been proposed to consider the swearer as the better of the two, for (1) this is in accordance with Qoh.'s previous order, in which the better precedes. (2) It was a duty to swear on proper occasions (Ex. xxii. 11). (3) Swearing, both in verb and substantive is seldom mentioned in a bad sense, without the addition of "falsely." In this case *he that feareth* an oath would be the man who knows his cause is unjust, and will not take the oath in a court of law.

II. Yet in Zech. v. 3 the swearer is evidently a wicked man, and only in the next verse is he said to swear falsely, and it is much more natural in our verse to give a good sense to the phrase, *he that feareth an oath*. This will mean either, he that respecteth an oath when taken, or (like the Mishna phrase "he that feareth sin"), he that feareth to take an unnecessary oath, is treated like the ready swearer. The order of the phrases is of

the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea also, the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that *they go* to
4 the dead. [1]For to him that is joined with all the living

[1] Another reading is, *For who is exempted? With all &c.* or, *who can choose? With all &c.*

little importance, for Qoh. has already called his reader's attention to the fact that he is making a change in his sentence.

There is no reason to think that Qoh. had the Essenes in his mind, who refused to take oaths—"swearing is avoided by them, and they esteem it worse than perjury; for they say, that he who cannot be believed, without [swearing by] God, is already condemned" (Jos. *B.J.* II. viii. 6, § 135.

3. That things happen alike to all produces senseless excitement—and then "to the dead!"

in all that is done under the sun] The Heb. is the same as in the end of *v.* 6.

one event (*v.* 2) *unto all: yea also, the heart*] Probably still epexegetic of *the evil*, and the consequence of the preceding clause. Translate, "yea also, that the heart."

is full of evil (viii. 11), *and madness* (i. 17, note, i.e. an unreasoning excitement) *is in their heart while they live* (contrast iii. 12, note, "so long as they live").

and after that] i.e. afterwards. Hardly "after him" (iii. 22, note), i.e. after his life, as McNeile explains it.

they go *to the dead*] Better as an exclamation "and afterwards—to the dead!" who are awaiting them. For a similar exclamation, see Isa. viii. 20.

4. The reason for Qoh.'s gloom in his expression, "and afterwards—to the dead" (*v.* 3). While a man is alive there is hope. But only then, for the most contemptible being that is alive is better off than the finest that is dead.

For to him that is joined with all the living] Occasionally in the Heb. Bible a word is written with certain consonants (called the *Kthîb*, "written"), and read aloud with others, or, as here, with a change in their order (the *Qrî*, "read"). Here the R.V. and A.V. translate the *Qrî*, but the R.V. margin gives two renderings of the *Kthîb*:

(1) "For who is exempted? With all," etc. The word is literally "who is chosen," i.e. by God for special blessing, *either* to be exempted from death (*v.* 3, Plu.), *or*, with a more positive *nuance*, to receive God's protection more than others and escape certain ills (Levy). In each case the implied answer is in the negative.

(2) "For who can choose? With all," etc. The thought is nearly the same; none has any choice in the matter; he must die.

there is hope: for a living dog is better than a dead lion.
For the living know that they shall die: but the dead 5
know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward;
for the memory of them is forgotten. As well their love, 6

But the *Qrî* "is joined" (*ychubbar* for *ybukkar*) is preferable, and is accepted by the LXX, Targ., Vulg. (*qui semper vivat*), Pesh.

Pod. makes further alterations, emending the verb to the plural, placing it at the end of *v.* 3, and also reading another verb in *v.* 4. Thus, "and after him they shall be joined to the dead. For who will remain? To all the living there is hope." This is attractive, for the Masoretic text is rather awkward, but it has no other support.

all] A little curious; it seems to hint that the dead are not worth enumerating in comparison with the living.

hope] A strong word in the Hebrew, implying a vivid and strong expectation of recovery, etc. It is translated "confidence," in 2 K. xviii. 19 || Isa. xxxvi. 4 †.

for a living dog] Literally "for as for a living dog." There is, that is to say, a preposition ("l") expressed, which here seems to emphasise the word "dog" to which it is joined. But it may be a form of the Arabic *lâ* or Assyrian *lû*, meaning "assuredly" (G.-K., § 143 *e*).

is better than a dead lion] The translation is idiomatic Eng., but the Heb. is more vivid, "the dead lion," picturing its corpse. A dog is the most contemptible animal in the East—yet when alive it is more effective than the king of beasts when dead. The most miserable life is better than death. So the Arabic version of *Ahikar*, II. 49, "a living fox is better than a dead lion," but in 51, "A living dog is better than a dead poor man."

5. Proof of the superiority of the living to the dead. The living can contemplate death, the dead know nothing and receive nothing, for they are utterly forgotten.

We have no right to consider this verse as the definite opinion of Qoh. about the state of the dead in the other world; he is only expressing the relation of the dead to this world as in *v.* 6. See Introd. pp. xliii—xlv.

For the living know that they shall die] Is this only irony? or does it not rather mean, and knowing this are able to make their arrangements accordingly, and enjoy life while they can? The latter seems more in accordance with Qoh.'s teaching. See further on iv. 2.

but the dead know not any thing] A dead person shows no sign of knowledge. The Talmud applies the phrase to the spiritually dead (T.B. *Berakoth*, 18 *a*, *b*; see A. Cohen's translation).

neither have they any more a reward] No payment for past services can be made to them now.

for the memory of them is forgotten] See ii. 16. Compare Wisd. ii. 4,

as their hatred and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

7 Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God hath already accepted

which some think was written against our author. In the Heb. there is a slight paronomasia between *śākār* ("reward") and *zikrām* ("their memory"). Plu. suggests "reward" and "record" as the nearest English rendering.

6. And every passion of the dead has perished, nor have they any more portion for ever in the affairs of this life.

This is one of the comparatively few verses in which Qoh. rises to real poetical expression.

as well...as...and] The Heb. emphasises each emotion by the same word, "also," or "too." But either would be tedious in English.

their love...their hatred] Here clearly these are the emotions felt by men; contrast *v.* 1. The first is the strongest of all human passions, and is acquisitive. The second is primarily defensive. Subordinate to it, and leading to it, is *their envy*. This was mentioned also in iv. 4.

is now perished] The singular calls attention to each feeling separately. It is "already" (*v.* 7, i. 10) perished —from the moment of death.

neither have they any more (though they had once) *a portion* (ii. 10, note) *for ever* (ii. 16)] The Vulg. gives *in hoc saeculo*, which rightly limits the statement to the relation of the dead to this world, but is wrong as a translation. For Qoh. means that never will they again have any share of happiness on earth.

7—10. With death approaching, as you know (*v.* 5), make the most of life.

In words that recall an ancient Babylonian epic and an ancient Egyptian poem, Qoh. bids his reader enjoy life to the full, for God gives thee this (*vv.* 7—9), working thy uttermost while life lasts, for there is no work in the grave (*v.* 10).

7. Eat and drink happily and fearlessly, for this is God's will.

Go thy way] cf. ii. 1. Don't stand brooding here in inactivity.

eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart] ii. 24, notes.

a merry heart] Lit. "a good heart," answering to "and make his soul enjoy good," in ii. 24. Compare Esth. v. 9 where "glad of heart" (R.V.) is lit. "good of heart." It is improbable that even the slightest contrast to "a wicked heart" (Prov. xxvi. 23) was intended, as Barton suggests.

for God hath already accepted thy works] Observe Qoh.'s reference to God. He is conscious that a man cannot get full enjoyment out of natural pleasures unless he is sure of God's approval upon

thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let 8

what he is doing. His words indeed go far less deep into things than our Lord's to the paralytic before healing him, "Son, thy sins are forgiven" (Mark ii. 5), but the principle is the same. But the exact meaning of our passage is not certain.

(1) It can hardly mean that thy works of piety have been accepted, for Qoh. says nothing about them.

(2) God's acceptance of thy works—with special reference to thy actions of eating and drinking—is shown by His having long since (see Introd. p. xxxvii) made such to be part of Nature. "*Ipsa constitutione mundi legumque mundanarum hoc ipsum Deus statuit, ut homo moderate frueretur bonis terrestribus, potius quam alia multa invito Deo appeteret*" (in Gietmann, p. 284, though not his own opinion). With this agrees the thought of ii. 24, viii. 15, and on the whole is to be preferred. Cf. Caietan (edn. 1634, III. p. 625): "*Quod enim est bonum delectabile secundum naturam et morem et sine alicuius iniuria, gratum est Deo, gubernatori universi.*"

(3) The fact that God has already given thee the means of eating and drinking, etc., shows that to do so is in accordance with His will. He has, by supplying them, already accepted thy use of them. This is in accordance with the common promise of the Old Testament that earthly prosperity is a sign of God's favour. Observe that on any of these interpretations Qoheleth is far removed from that form of Epicureanism which would enjoy the present, regardless of the gods.

An interesting fragment of the Gilgamesh epic is translated into German by Meissner in the *Mittheilungen der vordernasiatischen Gesellschaft*, 1902, Heft 1, Kol. III, which may be rendered into English as follows:

Gilgamesh, why runnest thou around?
Thy Life which thou seekest thou wilt not find.
When the gods created man,
Death they ordained for man,
And retained Life in their hands.
Gilgamesh, fill thy paunch,
Day and night be thou joyful,
Daily make festivity.
Day and night be merry and happy.
Let thy garments be bright,
Thy head be clean, and wash thee with water.
Gaze on the little one who takes hold of thy hand.
Thy wife enjoy in thy bosom,
Gladly (?) thy work (?).

For an Egyptian parallel, see *v.* 8.

8. Live in luxury.

Let thy garments be always white] So in the Gilgamesh fragment (*vide supra*), "Let thy garments be bright." Only here in the Old Testament is *white* alone used of garments (for "white linen" in

9 not thy head lack ointment. [1]Live joyfully with the wife

[1] Or, *Enjoy* (Heb. *See*) *life*

2 Chron. v. 12 A.V. is only a paraphrase for "byssus"), but Esth. viii. 15 speaks of Mordecai wearing "royal apparel of blue and white," and, as we should expect, fine garments were worn on festal occasions, cf. Judith's "garments of gladness" (Judith x. 3). See also 2 Sam. xii. 20, xix. 24. Thus the O.T. itself does not elsewhere connect white garments with eating and drinking. And perhaps here also Qoheleth did not intend his words to be so limited, but connected white garments with the thought of superiority to all care and turmoil and the anxiety of daily life. This may be the chief thought of Dan. vii. 9 where we read of God Himself, "His raiment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool." And so in N.T. and Talmudic times the angels are pictured as in white robes (cf. Ezek. ix. 2, x. 2, 6). The command of our verse was obeyed literally by the Essenes (Josephus, *B.J.* II. viii. 3, § 123), and by the witty Sisinnius, Novatian bishop of Constantinople, who claimed Solomon as his authority for always wearing white (Socr. *H.E.* VI. 22). For being clothed in white garments (*albatus*) at banquets, cf. Horace, *Sat.* II. 2. 61; Cic. *in Vatinium*, c. xiii.

and let not thy head lack ointment] The picture of a refined gentleman dressed in white garments with his head richly perfumed—and this not only at banquets—does not appeal to us as it does to an Oriental. For the custom of perfuming the hair, see Ps. xxiii. 5; Amos vi. 6, and compare 2 Sam. xii. 20; Ps. xlv. 7; Prov. xxvii. 9; Isa. lxi. 3; Wisd. ii. 7 (which may refer to our passage). Plu., referring to Roman customs at feasts, refers to "the *perfusus liquidis odoribus* of Hor. *Od.* I. 5; and the *Assyriaque nardo potamus uncti* ('let us drink anointed with Assyrian nard') of Hor. *Od.* II. 11." And so Martial, VIII. 77. 3, 4:

> Si sapis, Assyrio semper tibi crinis amomo
> Splendeat, et cingant florea serta caput!

The Egyptian *Lay of the Harper* (12th Dyn., Petrie, 3459—3246 B.C.) says, "Follow thy desire while thou livest: lay myrrh upon thy head, clothe thee in fine linen, imbued with luxurious perfumes." It continues much like our next verse, "Increase yet more thy delights, let not thine heart be weary: follow thy desire and thy pleasure and mould thine affairs on earth after the mandates of thine heart" (G. A. F. Knight, *Nile and Jordan*, 1921, p. 91).

9. Enjoy life, along with thy wife. For this is thy privilege.

Live joyfully] Literally "see (i.e. enjoy) life," Vulg. *Perfruere vita*. Cf. iii. 13, and also ii. 1. With Symm. ἀπόλαυσον ζωῆς, compare 1 Tim. vi. 17, where St Paul says God gives εἰς ἀπόλαυσιν, implying much beyond the bare need.

with the wife whom thou lovest] See Gilgamesh quoted above. The Heb. has no definite article before *wife*, just as we also can

whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in life, and in thy labour wherein thou labourest under the sun. Whatsoever 10
thy hand [1]findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in [2]the grave, whither thou goest.

[1] Or, *attaineth to do by thy strength*, that *do* [2] Heb. *Sheol*.

just say "with wife whom thou lovest." For the following words imply that she is with thee all thy life. Hence, although the Heb. has but one word for "woman" and "wife," it is a mistake to interpret the expression (with Ginsburg) of any woman at any time. Qoh. is thinking of the normal joys of life. Compare Prov. v. 18 *sq*. The passage stands in no sort of contradiction to vii. 26 where the writer has a harlot in mind. Jer. spiritualises the wife as Wisdom:

Sapientiam sequere et scientiam Scripturarum, et hanc tibi in coniugium copula, de qua in Proverbiis (iv. 8) *dicitur: Ama illam, et servabit te: amplexare illam et circumdabit te.*

which] This is doubtless right, as in viii. 15, though a few scholars have taken it as "whom."

all the days of the life of thy vanity] Hardly repeated for emphasis (Levy), but a mistaken copy of the earlier phrase. It is omitted by LXX ($B^{b}A$), the Targum, and Jerome's Commentary, though present in the Vulgate.

for that] "Oriental" manuscripts read the fem., which may perhaps mean "she." But, unless we emend the earlier part of the verse rather severely, it is more natural (even with the feminine form) to take the word as a neuter, representing the happiness described from the beginning of *v*. 7. See v. 19 (18), also iii. 22, v. 18 (17), viii. 15 for the common and masc. form.

thy portion] ii. 10, note.

10. Work your utmost while you can, for there is no such thing as work, etc., in the grave. Cf. John ix. 4.

This verse is perhaps the strongest of Qoh.'s statements about the absence of physical or mental toil or progress after death. But it is hardly enough to warrant us in saying that he expected annihilation or even mere semi-conscious existence after death. He may still be contrasting the evident silence of the grave with the activity of earth. Compare Ecclus. xiv. 11—16.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do] For the figure see Judg. ix. 33; 1 Sam. x. 7. The thought is of work, not pleasure, as the negatives of the second half of the verse show. The margin follows the Heb. accents, but is improbable.

device] See vii. 25 (note "wisdom and the reason *of things*").

the grave] Margin, "Heb. *Sheol*," the only place in the book

11 I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is
not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet
bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding,
nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance
12 happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his

where She'ôl is mentioned. Observe that it is regarded here solely as the place of the dead, without any connotation of punishment as in later non-canonical books, even Ecclus. xxi. 10 (Hebrew not extant). Observe that the dead are here said to go to She'ôl even though (iii. 20) they turn to dust. And so in Ps. xxx. 3, 9.

11, 12. Qoh. here returns to his favourite topics, the uncertainty of reward for toil and the suddenness of death. In the preceding *vv.* he has dwelt upon (1) the duty of using opportunities for happiness (*vv.* 7—9) and (2) the duty of working one's hardest (*v.* 10). Now by inversion he reminds his readers that reward for work is not guaranteed (*v.* 11), and that death may come suddenly and spoil one's plans (*v.* 12).

11. Qoh.'s experience has been that neither quickness, nor strength, nor skill, nor intelligence, nor knowledge, assures success. Man is subordinate to the chance of time and event.

I returned, and saw] i.e. "Again I saw," see iv 1, note, though the Heb. construction (cf. viii. 9) is not identical (G.-K. § 113*z*)

under the sun] He describes what happens on earth.

the race] It is absurd to think that this points to a time when Greek games had been established in Palestine. The young have always run against time or against each other, e.g. 2 Sam. xviii. 23.

the strong] See 1 Sam. xvii. 47; Ps. xxxiii. 16.

favour] i.e. in the sight of men. This is illustrated in *vv.* 14—16. So also all the versions. It is quite unnecessary to read *hôn* ("wealth") instead of *chên* ("favour"). The substantive recurs in x. 12 (English, "are gracious").

to men of skill] Literally, "to them that know" (cf. Job xxxiv. 1). Observe in Is. xi. 2 the same qualities, though in a slightly different order, wisdom, understanding, might, knowledge.

time and chance] Not an hendiadys, "the time of misfortune" (Ginsburg). The former word brings out the fact that unless a thing is done precisely at the right moment it will fail, to a greater or less degree. The second is not properly "chance" but an event that meets one (see the verb in Amos v. 19). In the only other passage where the Heb. substantive occurs it is further qualified by "evil" (1 Kings v. 4 [18]).

happeneth] "Chanceth," as in ii. 14 (note, "one event happeneth").

12. For a man does not even know the day of his death, any more than do the fishes and the birds which are caught.

For man] The Heb. has the definite article, bringing the individual vividly before us. Our weaker idiom is "a man."

time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, even so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

13 I have also seen wisdom under the sun on this wise, and it seemed great unto me: there was a little city, and 14

also] This emphasises his ignorance on so important a subject.

his time] Almost certainly the time of his death, see vii. 17. But some think that the reference is to any calamity, such as has been mentioned in *v.* 11. If so, the *also* is superfluous.

as the fishes] Ezek. xxxii. 3.

in an evil net] The word *evil* is omitted in Vulg. and Targ. and is doubtless a gloss from the next line. Compare *v.* 9 for the same carelessness on the part of a scribe.

net] Compare vii. 26 and especially Ecclus. ix. 3 (R.V. "snares"). R. Aqiba (died 135 A.D.) has the same word as here in his saying, "Everything is given on pledge; and the net is spread over all the living" (*Ethics of the Fathers*, III. 20 [25]), but the net there does not mean "death," but the necessity of giving account.

and as the birds that are caught in the snare] or rather "the gin," which seems to have been made of two semicircular network flaps, which flew up when the bait was touched (see Dr. on Amos iii. 5). For the metaphor of birds see Ps. xci. 3, cxxiv. 7; Prov. i. 17, vi. 5, vii. 23.

in an evil time] The construction of the Hebrew is probably the same as that of "the day of adversity" (vii. 14), which is literally "a day of evil." So here "in a time of evil," to which evil the *it* of the next clause refers.

13—16. A concrete example of the way in which wisdom sometimes fails to bring personal advantage (*v.* 12).

13. *I have also seen wisdom under the sun on this wise*] A good paraphrase of what is literally, "This also have I seen as wisdom under the sun." The A.V. rendering, "This wisdom," is impossible.

wisdom] As exhibited by the poor man. Hardly the resultant knowledge deduced from the whole incident.

and it seemed great (Ex. xviii. 22) *unto me*] The A.V. rightly puts "seemed" in italics. But it is necessary for the sense. So Symmachus καὶ μεγάλη δοκεῖ μοι. The same Hebrew construction occurs in Esth. x. 3.

14. The example. A little town besieged by a great king. The Targ. says the body of a man is like a small town, and its remarks are suggestive of Bunyan's *Holy War*. It is however not likely that Bunyan knew anything of the Targum.

there was a little city] Nothing whatever is known of the incident described in this and the next verse, but it has provided material for guesswork on the part of commentators. (1) The least im-

few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it:

probable of the identifications proposed is the siege of Abel-beth-Maacah by Joab who "cast up a mount against the city, and it stood against the rampart." It was delivered owing to the advice of "a wise woman" (2 Sam. xx. 15—22). The ingratitude would then lie in the oblivion into which even her name had fallen. But we should have expected that the wise person mentioned in *v.* 15 would have been expressly designated as a woman. Other conjectures, in chronological order of the events, are (2) Xerxes' attack on Athens, defeated by Themistocles' stratagem which brought about the defeat of the Persians at Salamis 480 B.C. Yet he himself was ostracised in 471 B.C. Luther (in Del.) gives this as an example of Qoh.'s general statement, as he believes it to be. (3) The siege of Dor by Antiochus the Great (218 B.C.) but Polybius (v. 66) who tells us of it says the siege was raised because of the situation of the city and the approach of the army of Nicolaus. (4) The siege of Syracuse by the Romans (212 B.C.), who were successful in spite of the inventions of Archimedes who was among the slain. (5) The siege of Bethsura by Antiochus V (Eupator) in 162 B.C. (1 Macc. vi. 31); (6) the siege of Dor by Antiochus VII (Sidetes) in 139—138 B.C. (1 Macc. xv. 11, 13, 25; Josephus *Antt.* XIII. vii. 2, §§ 223 *sq.*), but if Dor was not taken, and this is not clear, it owed its preservation to Simon then high priest at Jerusalem. Besides, (5) and (6) are too late.

and there came] Doubtless the translation is right, but only in late Heb. The LXX therefore translates καὶ ἔλθῃ, i.e. "and suppose there come," and so with all the verbs as far as "delivered," its apodosis beginning with "yet no man."

a great king] Sennacherib as King of Assyria is called "the great king" in Isa. xxxvi. 4 || 2 K. xviii. 19, and the term was used by the Persians, and even by some Greek successors to the empire, "when there was some special reason to emphasise the oriental dominion" (E. R. Bevan, *The House of Seleucus*, II. 270). But it is also used of ordinary kings in Jer. xxvii. 7. The phrase does not therefore limit the incident to a siege by an emperor.

and besieged it] His army was "round about it," as was the host in 2 Kings vi. 15.

and built great bulwarks against it] The word translated "bulwarks" (*mtzôdim*) occurs here only (though almost the same in form as "net" (*mtzôdah*) in *v.* 12), but a kindred form means "fastness" both in its singular (*mtzād*, 1 Chr. xi. 7) and its plural form (*mtzādôth*, Ezek. xix. 9), but never "siege-works," which is the sense required here. It is therefore better to read *mtzôrim*. See the singular *mātzôr* in Mic. v. 1; Ezek. iv. 2, and a plural form *mtzûrôth* in Isa. xxix. 3. And so the LXX, χάρακας (Pesh. = χαράκωμα), Symm. ἀποτείχισμα, and, as it seems, two Heb. MSS.

now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his 15
wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that
same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than 16
strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised,
and his words are not heard.

15. A poor man who is wise delivers the city by his wisdom—and is forgotten!

now there was found] Literally, "and one found," i.e. the verb is impersonal, as often in Heb., e.g. i. 10. But a few critics regard it as carrying on the preceding sentence, i.e. "and the king found," or came across, contrary to his expectation; cf. Ps. cxvi. 3, margin.

poor] The same Heb word as in iv. 13.

and...delivered] McN. translates "would have delivered," because of the end of *v.* 16. But it would have been impossible to know that his advice was really of any good if it were not taken. Also the whole point of the illustration is not that wisdom brings no gain at all, but that though it may help others, it does not necessarily bring personal gain to the wise man himself. Plu. compares the ingratitude that the chief butler showed to Joseph, Gen. xl. 23.

remembered] A few commentators strangely suppose this to mean, did not remember him when the inhabitants of the city were still besieged and looking everywhere for help.

16. Qoh.'s reflection on the incident. Wisdom, no doubt, is better than strength—yet if a wise man is poor he is neglected.

Then said I] The *I* is emphatic, as in ii. 13.

strength] The Heb. word (*gbûrah*) recurs in this book only in x. 17; it connotes the strength of the warrior (*gibbôr*).

despised...not heard] The participles suggest customary action.

his words] Perhaps there is no direct reference to the poor man of the incident. For it is true as a common experience that if a wise man is poor no one takes note of what he says. But the phrase may mean the poor man's appeal for recognition after saving the city. So in Ex. xxiv. 14, the Heb. phrase, which is literally "who is the owner of words," is rightly translated "whosoever hath a cause." Our passage does not refer to a man who was endeavouring in vain to persuade his fellow citizens to use the right means of defence; see the note on the preceding verse.

The Heb. text of Ecclus. xiii. 21 *sq.* runs as follows in Oesterley's translation: "When a rich man is in difficulties he is supported by a friend, but when a poor man is in difficulties he is thrust away by a friend. A rich man speaketh, and his supporters are many, and his unseemly words [are pronounced] beautiful. A poor man speaketh, and they hiss him (lit. they raise [the cry] Yah, Yah!); yea, though he speak wisdom, they will not suffer him."

17 The words of the wise [1]*spoken* in quiet are heard more
18 than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. Wisdom is

[1] Or, heard [*sic*, but read *heard*] *in quiet are better than &c.*

17—x. 3. Proverbial sayings about wisdom, the first of which is suggested by the phraseology of the end of *v.* 16.

17. Wisdom combined with gentleness effects more than a ruler's shouting—when fools are listening to him.

The words of the wise (xii. 11 is only verbally identical) spoken *in quiet* (iv. 6, note "quietness) *are heard more than*, etc.] The margin gives, The words of the wise "heard in quiet are better than," etc., although the construction is not certain, the meaning comes to nearly the same, for in either case the thought is that the wise speak quietly. For the marginal rendering in which "better" is inferred from the "than," see v. 1 (iv. 17), note.

the cry] The word (*z'ākāh*) occurs fairly often (though this is the only place where the root is found in this book) but nowhere in the meaning of mere clamour, or shouting. See below.

of him that ruleth among fools] (1) Most commentators (e.g. Del., Wright, McN.) interpret this as describing one who is *primus inter pares*, "himself a fool of the first class," "an arch-fool," and refer to 2 Sam. xxiii. 3, which however certainly does not mean "an arch-man." Prov. xxx. 30; Job xli. 34 (26) give more, but not very complete, support. The wise man is thus contrasted with a supreme fool in his method and its result.

(2) But this is not the point. No one would expect "a prince among fools" to do better than a wise man. The author is contrasting a wise man with him who has power, and seems to be able to accomplish all his will. It is not so. His power is limited. If he is a ruler over (2 Sam. xxiii. 3) fools who refuse to listen to him he can do nothing, however loudly he speaks.

(3) Pod. however is not quite satisfied with either of these interpretations, and suggests that *môshēl* (he that *ruleth*) should be rendered "he that speaks in proverbs" (Num. xxi. 27; cf. Ezek. xvi. 44), the passage then meaning that the words of the wise spoken quietly are heard better than the bawling of the public story-tellers. But this supposes a rare use of the word, and one contrary to the use of it in x. 4.

(4) Lastly, none of the above interpretations does full justice to the use of *z'ākāh*, which is always a cry of pain or an appeal for help (Gen. xviii. 20 is not really an exception). The Targ. may therefore be on the right track of the meaning of the verse, viz. "The words of the prayer of the wise (spoken) in silence have more acceptance before the Lord of the universe than the cry of a wicked man who rules over fools, who cry aloud and are not accepted." We know very little about the methods of public prayer in Israel, but if large congregations had a leader, as Mohammadan congregations have, to guide in words and in

better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good. Dead flies cause the ointment of the per- 10

prostrations, he might be designated as "he that ruleth." Let him and his senseless imitators make what noisy appeal to God they will, the quiet prayers of the wise prevail.

18. Another saying, the first part of which was suggested by the incident in *vv.* 14—16. Wisdom is better than the material of war, yet the effect of one sin may be incalculable.

Wisdom is better than weapons of war] The second clause shows that here, and perhaps always, wisdom means more than mere cleverness of brain, and has moral and religious content. The truth of the saying in its fullest meaning is illustrated by the Great War, in which the superiority of moral ideals over brute force was vindicated.

weapons] Though the Heb. word does not recur in our book it is very common throughout the Bible in the sense of article, utensil, vessel, implement, apparatus, equipment.

of war (*qrâb*)] A rare and mostly poetical word, generally regarded as an Aramaism.

but one sinner destroyeth much good] No doubt it is true that often in history one careless soldier has spoiled the plans of a clever general, and also that Achan, though but one man, brought great loss on the whole nation (Josh. vii. 1, 4), yet the contrast between *wisdom* and *sinner* is not very sharp. One would expect "sin." This very reason indeed arouses suspicion of the reading "sin" which is found in some Heb. manuscripts, and in Pesh., and was also, it seems, accepted by Saadiah (in Pod.). Yet it is so much simpler, and suits the next verse so well, that it is on the whole to be accepted. Wisdom is better than the material of war, but one sin is, in its own line, even more powerful, for it does away with much good. To stumble in one point is to become guilty of all (James ii. 10). Compare our Lord's saying of the importance of each command (Matt. v. 19).

Chapter X.

1. An illustration of ix. 18. As dying flies spoil precious ointment, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and splendour. Compare 1 Cor. v. 6.

Dead flies] The Heb. phrase is literally "flies of death," and so the LXX, as it seems, originally had *μυῖαι θανάτου σαπριοῦσιν κ.τ.λ.*, but an early copyist, by joining the first letters of the next word, produced *θανατοῦσαι* (see McN.), "death-dealing," i.e. poisonous. But what difference the poison would make is not apparent. Hence most commentators, including Aben Ezra, explain, like the R.V., *Dead flies*. But as a translation it is impossible, for it is not the meaning of the Heb. idiom, where *death* is the second substantive.

fumer [1]to send forth a stinking savour: *so* doth a
2 little folly [2]outweigh wisdom and honour. A wise man's

[1] Or, *to stink and putrefy*
[2] Or, *him that is valued for wisdom*

In 1 Sam. xx. 31 David is called "a son of death," but he is not dead. Nor are Abner and Saul's other guards in 1 Sam. xxvi. 16; nor Mephibosheth's relations in 2 Sam. xix. 28. In all these cases the people were but near death or deserved death. So here the flies are practically, but not quite, dead. They are dying. So Vulg. *muscae morientes*, and Rashi, "as in the beginning of winter when flies have no strength and are nigh unto death." And in fact this suits the illustration best. Flies actually dead can be collected easily, it is the half-dead that are so troublesome. Naturally, the harm they do will come only when they have died. The phrase indeed in itself may mean only "mortal," but this is feeble here.

cause...to send forth a stinking savour] Or, as the margin, "to stink and putrefy." These translations represent two verbs in the Hebrew, each in the singular and with no conjunction between them. The singular may be due to the many flies being each regarded in itself (Aben Ezra), or, more probably, to their being all treated as a collective. But in any case the Heb. is very harsh, and is almost certainly corrupt. We may omit one of the verbs, preferably the second, and turn the other into a plural, translating, "Dying flies will stink—the ointment of the perfumer will ferment," such an asyndeton being sometimes found in proverbial sayings (Prov. xviii. 17, xx. 4; Ps. cxlvii. 18 *b*, where "but," "therefore," "and" are corrections). So also Prov. xxvi. 26 where "though" is merely for the English reader, and Ps. civ. 28–30 (cf. Driver, *Hebrew Tenses*, § 151). But perhaps we should simply read "a fly dieth (*zbûb yāmûth*) (and) causeth the ointment of the perfumer to stink, or ferment."

The word here translated "ferment" (*yabbîa'*) is from the same root as *mabbûa'*, "spring of water," and means to "gush forth" or, rather, "pour forth," always elsewhere of the spirit (Prov. i. 23), and, much more commonly, of words (Prov. xv. 28). Here of the bubbles and "working" apparent in anything that ferments. It is never used elsewhere in the causative sense, "make something else pour forth," as the R.V. requires.

so *doth a little folly* (i. 17, note) *outweigh wisdom and honour*] Lit. "weightier than wisdom, than honour, is a little folly."

The margin, which is practically the A.V., gives, "so doth a little folly him that is valued for wisdom and honour," in which the force of the verbs in the first half of the verse is carried on into this. But although it is Aben Ezra's interpretation it is very strained and unnatural. The difficulty of the clause lies partly in

heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left.
Yea also, when the fool walketh by the way, his [1]under- 3

[1] Heb. *heart.*

"weightier" which elsewhere means "precious," the Heb. having here taken the sense of its Aram. form (see Dan. ii. 11, translated "rare"). Dr. in Kittel, would emend the clause simply to "and a little folly destroys the preciousness of wisdom." For sometimes persons, with learning and in easy circumstances, are so spoiled by a little folly that they gain no respect, and exercise no real influence, and are perhaps regarded as little more than buffoons. Yet the common text of the Vulg. must not be forgotten, *Pretiosior est sapientiâ et gloriâ parva et ad tempus stultitia.* Most of this is in itself a possible translation, but disregards the context.

2. A paradoxical statement of the superiority of the wise over the fool.

A wise man's heart (i. 13, note) *is at his right hand*] Most modern commentators (not Pod.) translate "(tends) towards his right hand," but the construction is not the same as in Gen. xiii. 9; Deut. v. 32, and the R.V. and A.V. are better. Not, of course, that the writer intended an anatomical definition, but by a paradox he expressed the thought that a wise man's purpose and intelligence are always on the side of the more important, the more vigorous, and the more successful of his efforts. Hence in the Bible as well as in common speech the value of the right side; see Ps. xvi. 8, cx. 1, 5. Therefore when Rachel called her son Ben-oni ("the son of my sorrow"), Jacob called him Ben-jamin ("the son of [the] right hand"). Further, in the Talmud the root means to use a thing in the right way, and to mark out a thing as typical of its kind.

but a fool's heart at his left] The left is the reverse of the right, and plainly means the less important, the less vigorous, and the less successful. In the Talmud the root means to make a wrong use of things. We also employ "sinister" (lit. "on the left hand") to express what is evil and villainous.

For the thought of the verse compare ii. 14. "The highest application of the symbolism is found in those that are set 'on the right hand' and 'on the left' in the parable of Matt. xxv. 31—46" (Plu.).

3. Wherever the fool goes he shows his true nature.

Yea also] In addition to the fact of his folly, this cannot be concealed.

when the fool (ii. 19) *walketh by the way*] As we should say, when he goes out. It is very improbable that the clause is figurative, i.e. when he goes on the common path of life. For in the Heb. "by the way" stands in an emphatic position immediately after "yea also."

his understanding (lit. "his heart") *faileth him*] Lit. "is lacking."

standing faileth him, and he saith [1]to every one *that* he
4 is a fool. If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee,
leave not thy place; for [2]yielding allayeth great offences.

[1] Or, *of* [2] Or, *gentleness leaveth great sins undone*

and he saith to every one that *he is a fool*] Cf. Prov. xviii. 2 and xvii. 28. This is the Jewish interpretation, and is probably right. Pod. quotes La Bruyère, "Un sot ni n'entre, ni ne sort, ni ne s'assied, ni ne se lève, ni ne se tait, ni n'est sur ses jambes, comme un homme d'esprit" (*Les Caractères*, II.). The margin is, saith "of" every one, and so Symmachus and the Vulgate, followed by Ginsburg, McN., Barton. Pod. slightly emends to "and all say," and so the Targum.

4—7. Sayings about Rulers.

One practical effect of wisdom, composure at a ruler's anger (*v.* 4). Rulers are capricious (*vv.* 5—7).

4. *If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee*] We say, if his temper rise, but for the Hebrew phrase see, for *spirit*, Judg. viii. 3; Zech. vi. 8, and for *rise up*, 2 Sam. xi. 20; Ezek. xxxviii. 18; Ps. lxxviii. 31.

leave not thy place] Hardly thy place at table (cf. David's absenting himself, 1 Sam. xx. 25, 27), but thy office. The nearest parallel to this use of *place* is 1 K. xx. 24. The writer warns against hastily throwing up one's position because one's superior loses his temper. Cf. viii. 3.

for yielding] Hardly possible as a translation. The word means "health" (Prov. xii. 18), or rather (from the cognate root) as in Prov. xiv. 30, xv. 4, "tranquillity," "composure." This root is used in Judg. viii. 3 for anger being assuaged. The "gentleness" of the R.V. margin is practically right.

allayeth] This is the same word in Heb. as *leave not*. Perhaps "set aside" may do for both.

great offences] Does this mean that gentleness on your part will allay the anger of the ruler even at your great offences (cf. Prov. xv. 1)? This would give good sense, but although the same root occurs in Zech. vi. 8 ("have quieted my spirit") it requires too much to be read into the verse. Hence it is preferable to adopt the translation of the R.V. margin, "Gentleness leaveth great sins undone," in the sense that composure not only prevents setting one's office aside, but also positively sets other and serious faults aside, such as treason and other sins (viii. 2 *sq.*).

5—7. The caprice of rulers illustrated in another way, by their arbitrary elevation and degradation of subjects. It is unnecessary to think with Pod. that the section should immediately follow ix. 16 because it suits ix. 11, 16 *b*. This is no logical treatise, and indeed the present position is good.

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as it 5
were an error which proceedeth from the ruler: folly is 6
set in great [1]dignity, and the rich sit in low place. I have 7

[1] Heb. *heights*.

5. Introduction.

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun] So vi. 1.

as it were an error] (v. 6, note), i.e. like a mere inadvertence. Qoh. is ironical; the ruler is not badly intentioned.

which (the antecedent is *an error*) *proceedeth from the ruler*] Jer. and others strangely suppose the verse to refer to Providence.

6. The example itself, folly set in high places and nobles in a humble condition.

folly] The concrete ("fool") is expressed by the same consonants but different vowels in ii. 19, and is so read here by the translators of LXX (with Aq. and Symm.) and of Pesh., who had no vowels before them. But the abstract is much more forcible.

is set] Lit. "is given," and so of an office in Deut. xvii. 15 ("put").

in great dignity] The literal meaning of the Heb. for *dignity* is "heights" (see the R.V. margin and cf. Job v. 11. (1) But the word *great* presents difficulties. For according to the present vocalisation the translation is "in the heights –great ones," an extremely irregular construction in Heb. (cf. Jer. ii. 21 for a similar instance). (2) It would be quite regular if the "the" were omitted (so Dr. in Kittel), following the versions, which had no vowels at all before them. (3) Hence some omit *great* (as also in Ezek. xxxix. 27, see G.-K. § 126 *z*)[1], and (4) others, perhaps preferably, treat it as a substantive (see Isa. liii. 12) and translate the verse, "Folly is set in heights, great and rich sit in low place." (5) It should be added that a few commentators prefer to render "many" instead of "great," Barton therefore paraphrasing, "in high positions often."

and the rich] Presumably men of ancestral wealth, the natural leaders.

sit in low place] The precise form comes only in Ps. cxxxvi. 23, "our low estate," but cognate words occur in chapters x. 18, xii. 4.

7. Another example of the same fact, slaves on horseback and chieftains on foot. Observe that the time is far removed from that of the Judges (v. 10, x. 4), and of David and Solomon (1 K. i. 33), but recalls the incident of Haman and Mordecai (Esth. vi. 11). Maundrell, quoted by Ginsburg, speaking of his trip in 1697 to see the gardens at Damascus, says, "on visiting these gardens, Franks are obliged either to walk on foot, or else to ride upon asses, the insolence of the Turks not allowing them to

[1] Two MSS. add "riding" (*rôkbîm*) before *upon horses*, and it is possible that *great* (*rabbim*) has then been introduced from *rôkhim* in the next line.

seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants
8 upon the earth. He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it;
and whoso breaketh through a fence, a serpent shall bite

mount on horseback" (T. Wright, *Early Travels in Palestine*, 1848, p. 492).

princes] Those of royal blood would hardly be so treated by the king, however autocratic. The word will therefore refer to chiefs of lower, though still high, rank. The word often means officials, e.g. 2 Chr. xxxiv. 8, "Maaseiah the governor ('prince') of the city."

8, 9. The connexion of these verses with the preceding—if there is any at all, and they are not merely a fresh extract from Qoh.'s commonplace book loosely appended—seems to be that in all positions sudden dangers may have to be faced, and the wise man will bear this in mind. In *vv.* 5—7 these were due to the caprice of the ruler; here to the chances of everyday life. There is, by the by, no hint that the acts stated in *vv.* 8, 9 were done with the intention of injuring others.

Ben Sirach may have seen in the context a further incitement to care in attendance on the ruler (*vv.* 4—7), for in Ecclus. xii. 13 he alludes to our *v.* 11, and in xiii. 1—13 bids his readers associate with their equals, and not with those of superior rank or wealth.

8. *He that diggeth a pit*] *Gummātz*, an Aram. word occurring only here in the O.T. For a similar phrase see Prov. xxvi. 27; Ecclus. xxvii. 26, and compare Ps. vii. 15 though this has a different *nuance*. In *Ahikar*. VIII. 41, Syriac, the author, commenting on the just death of Nadan in requital of his treachery to his uncle Ahikar, adds "And he that diggeth a pit for his neighbour, filleth it with his own stature."

shall fall into it] Either a frequentative future—i.e. it happens often—or, better, expressing the judgement of God in the moral sphere of action.

and whoso breaketh through] Rather, "breaketh down," as the same word is translated in iii. 3. The object of pulling down is not stated.

a fence] Not a railing, for wood is much too scarce in Palestine, much less a hedge, which is too inflammable to be used in hot countries, but a rough unmortared wall, such as one sees in the west and north of England. The crevices form excellent hiding places for snakes.

a serpent shall bite him] Cf. Amos v. 19. Plu., with his rather fanciful ingenuity, writes, "If you are too daring a reformer, removing the tottering wall of a decayed and corrupt institution, you may expect that the serpents in the crannies, those who have 'vested interests' in the abuse, will bite the hand that disturbs them. You need beforehand to 'count the cost' of the work of reformation."

him. Whoso [1]heweth out stones shall be hurt therewith; 9
and he that cleaveth wood is endangered thereby. If the 10

[1] Or, *moveth stones*

R. Petachiah of Ratisbon a traveller of the 12th cent. A.D. says "underneath most of the cloths or mats covering the graves [on the banks of the Euphrates) a serpent is coiled, which guards the grave. Therefore they say to everyone 'When thou raisest the mat, beware of the serpent'" (Edition Benisch, p. 37).

9. *Whoso heweth out stones*] The margin "moveth stones," and the A.V. "removeth stones," are more accurate, for the operation of hewing as such is not meant, but that of moving when hewn (see 1 K. v. 17 [31]). The thought is of a stone still in the quarry and in the act of being moved from its original site (cf. 1 K. vi. 7). Symm. *μετεωρῶν λίθους*—"swinging stones in the air" by ropes and "sheaves," which, though a little beyond the terms of the Heb., is what is intended. The danger of such work is included in the words of Prov. xxvi. 27, "He that rolleth a stone, it shall return upon him," which Cod A adds to the LXX here.

shall be hurt therewith] Although the verb is used elsewhere of mental pain only, the meaning is clear, and no emendation is required.

and he that cleaveth wood] It is not certain whether the work is that of the woodcutter in the forest, or of the caretaker of the household, or temple, fire. For the word translated *wood* may mean small pieces (Gen. xxii. 3; Lev. i. 7, iv. 12), or even the fittings of a waggon and its harness (1 Sam. vi. 14), or else trees (ch. ii. 5 *sq.*), and that translated *cleaveth* has nothing distinctive about it, and indeed is used in its simple (Qal) voice here only of wood (not even in Ps. cxli. 7). In Gen. xxii. 3 and 1 Sam. vi. 14 the intensive (Piel) voice is used. We are then free to choose, and as the woodcutter's task is far the more dangerous (see Deut. xix. 5), and alone presents any parallel to the stone-quarrier, it is to be preferred here.

is endangered thereby] Better, "sets himself in danger thereby." The verb occurs here only in the O.T., and is due to Aram. influence.

The fifth Logion discovered in 1897 reads: "Jesus saith, Wherever there are (two), they are not without God, and wherever there is one alone, I say, I am with him. Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find me; cleave the wood, and there am I." This Logion is very obscure, but perhaps it was intended to meet the need suggested by our verse, and to encourage the worker in all difficult and dangerous tasks with the assurance of his Lord's presence.

iron be blunt, and one do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to

10, 11. The Advantage of Forethought.

Difficulties and accidents attend every walk in life (*vv.* 8, 9), but "wisdom" makes all the difference in overcoming them.

10. The woodman (*v.* 9) suggests the axe. A wise man sees that it is sharp before he uses it.

If the iron (of an axe in Deut. xix. 5; 2 K. vi. 5) *be blunt* (elsewhere only of teeth being "set on edge," Jer. xxxi. 29 *sq.*; Ezek. xviii. 2), *and one do not whet the edge.*

and one] Lit. "and he," the user of the tool, e.g. the woodman just mentioned.

not] See below.

whet] Lit. "move rapidly," i.e. in sharpening. In Ezek. xxi. 21 the word is used of the king of Babylon shaking the arrows to and fro for purposes of divination, and the same root is used in Ezek. i. 7; Dan. x. 6, of bright, i.e. polished, metal.

the edge] Lit. "face." And so some translate Ezek. xxi. 16, "whithersoever thine edge is appointed" instead of the rendering of the A.V. and R.V., "whithersoever thy face is set." An improbable translation, based partly on the Vulgate, is, "and one do not whet (it) aforetime" (*pānîm* as *lphānîm*).

then must he put to more strength] Lit. "then will he strengthen (Zech. x. 6, 12) forces." The Heb. word in the plur. always elsewhere (except in Isa. xxx. 6) means armies, but in this verse either a high degree of bodily strength, or the various forms in which it is exercised.

It should be noted that instead of *not* (*lô'*) the "eastern" Masoretic manuscripts, followed, as it seems, by the LXX and Pesh., read "for it" (*lô*). The translation will then be "then one whets its edge, and will put to more strength." But the sense is not so good.

but wisdom is profitable to direct] The best literal translation is that of the *Oxford Lexicon*, "and an advantage (i. 3, note *profit*) for giving success is wisdom," of which the A.V. and R.V. may be deemed a rather poor paraphrase. The meaning of the clause is, It may be sufficient to muddle through with a blunt axe, but there is advantage in securing success, and this advantage rests with the intelligent use of means. A wise man would have whetted his axe before he began his work, halving his toil and doing it better. Other interpretations are, (1) By a slight alteration of the vowel points: "But it is a gain to use wisdom with success" (Plu.), which gives the same general lesson. (2) By a slight alteration of the consonants, "and an advantage to the successful man is wisdom" (McN.). But, though this may claim some support from the LXX, it is a platitude.

direct. [1]If the serpent bite [2]before it be charmed, then 11
is there no advantage in [3]the charmer. The words of a 12
wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will

[1] Or, *Surely the serpent will bite where there is no enchantment, and the slanderer is no better.*

[2] Heb. *without enchantment.*

[3] Heb. *the master of the tongue.*

The word translated "for giving success" is from the same root as that translated *skilfulness* in ii. 21, and the verb recurs in its simple (Qal) voice in xi. 6 *shall prosper.*

11. Another example of the value of forethought. When harm has been done it is too late. The wise man uses his knowledge and uses it in time. The A.V. is curiously wrong.

If the serpent bite before it be charmed] This gives the right sense, but the literal translation is "If the serpent (the article is only deictic, and there is no direct reference to *v.* 8) bite when there is no charming." The construction resembles Job xv. 32, "before his time" (lit. "when it is not his day"). The "charming" is properly the whispering or muttering of the charmers. For the meaning of the root compare Isa. xxvi. 16; Ps. xli. 7.

then there is no advantage in (or rather, "for") *the charmer* (lit. "the owner of the tongue"; cf. "that which hath wings," lit. "the owner of the wings," in *v.* 20)] Probably in the charming the tongue made a noise by rapidly quivering. For although the use of a musical instrument, such as a flute, is very common, it is not universal, and, presumably, is the less primitive method.

For references to snake charming in the O.T. see Ps. lviii. 4 *sq.*; Jer. viii. 17; also Ecclus. xii. 13, "who will pity a charmer that is bitten?"

The A.V. (cf. R.V. margin), "Surely the serpent will bite without enchantment; and a babbler is no better," singularly fails to catch the meaning of the verse. "The owner of the tongue" might indeed in itself mean "the babbler," though there is no direct evidence that it does, and this interpretation is not suggested by the context. Also the first word can hardly be rendered "surely," in the absence of any hint of adjuration.

The whole verse, it should be noted, is in assonance, which may be rendered very roughly, "If the snake seizes ere sing-song, nothing's gained by singing."

12–**15**. Fools and their talk. The verses form a good pendant to the encouragement to wisdom in *vv.* 10, 11.

12. A wise man's words are very grace, a fool's own lips engulf him. With the whole verse compare Prov. x. 21.

are gracious] Lit. "(are) grace" or "(are) favour," the thought being that his words wholly correspond to the idea of favour in the sight of others. See ix. 11, note. Cf. Ps. xlv. 3; Prov. xiii. 15, xxii. 11.

13 swallow up himself. The beginning of the words of his
mouth is foolishness: and the end of [1]his talk is mis-
14 chievous madness. A fool also multiplieth words: *yet* man
knoweth not what shall be; and that which shall be after

[1] Heb. *his mouth*.

Plu. compares "the gracious words (literally *words of grace*) of Luke iv. 22," and adds, "They describe the quality in speech which wins favour, what the Greeks called the ἠθικὴ πίστις (*moral suasion*) which conciliates the good will of the hearers (Aristot. *Rhet.* I. 2. § 3)."

will swallow up] The same metaphor is found in Isa. xxv. 7 *sq.*; Job viii. 18, x. 8; Prov. xix. 28. For the thought compare Prov. xviii. 7. For the Heb. construction see G.-K. § 145 *k*.

13. Not only do a fool's words affect him (*v.* 12 *b*), they are injurious to others. The next verse suggests that the special form of folly which the author has in mind is talk about the future. One cannot imagine that Qoh. would have had any sympathy with writers of apocalypses.

The beginning...the end] vii. 8 does not apply in this case! The latter part of a fool's speech is much worse than the beginning.

foolishness...madness] See notes on i. 17.

his talk] Margin "Heb. *his mouth*"; it would have been inelegant to repeat *the words of his mouth*.

mischievous] Literally, "evil," but a platitude unless the term means "actively harmful."

14. However much a fool may talk none can learn the future from him.

A fool (ii. 19) *also multiplieth words* (vi. 11, note)] This is the protasis—"Though he does so—yet." There is no occasion to suppose with McN. and Barton that the second half of the verse is a separate fragment, the real sequence to the first half having been lost.

yet *man*] The "yet" expresses the sense, and is actually read by some MSS.

man] Not generic, nor the fool himself, but "the man" that hears him speaking. He will not really learn anything about the future.

knoweth not what shall be] In the future generally, perhaps in spite of foolish statements about eschatological events. The phrase occurs in viii. 7, but in quite a different connexion. The LXX, followed by Symm., Vulg., Pesh., read "what *was*," through the influence of i. 9.

and that which shall be after him] i.e. the future in relation to himself and his family. As none can foretell the future affecting the world, so none can inform him even of what will happen soon after his death.

after him] iii. 22, ix. 3, notes.

him, who can tell him? The labour of fools wearieth 15
every one of them, for he knoweth not how to go to

15. Fools' toil in talking only wearies each of them—for he does not know how to do the simplest thing. But the verse is far from easy.

The labour] Presumably in elaborating his discourse. But see below.

of fools] The word is the same as in *v.* 12, not as in *v.* 14. A few MSS. read the singular, thus removing one of the difficulties of the verse and so ℵA of the LXX, and Targ.

wearieth] For the root see i. 8, xii. 12.

every one of them] Literally, simply "him"; see below.

for he knoweth not how to go to the city] (1) Levy has an interesting quotation from the Babylonian Talmud (*Erubin*, 53 *b*), which runs in the Munich MS.:

Once I was going on a journey, and I saw a child who was sitting at a parting of the ways, and I said to him "My son, by which way should we go to the city?" He said to me, "This (way) is long and short, and this is short and long." I went by the short and long. When I drew near to the city fields and parks were encompassing it. So I turned back. I said to him, "Didst thou not say thus to me, 'This is short'?" He said to me "And did I not say to thee, 'This is long'?" Straightway I kissed his head, and said to him, "Blessed are ye O Israel, for ye are all wise, great and small alike."

(2) But though "the longest way round is the shortest way home," this is hardly the thought of our verse, which is that the way to a town is so plainly marked (although there were few, if any, made roads in Palestine) that it can only be missed by a fool. And these vapouring fools, means Qoh., can miss it. They are so ignorant, in spite of their pretensions. But in Messianic times a highway shall be set, and even foolish travellers will not go wrong on it (Isa. xxxv. 8).

Plu. says "We are reminded of the saying, attributed, if I remember rightly, to the Emperor Akbar that 'None but a fool is lost on a straight road,' or of Shakespeare's, 'The "why" is plain as way to parish church' (*As You Like It*, II. 7)."

(3) There is however another way of explaining the verse which perhaps keeps closer to the Heb. and is to be preferred. "The physical toil of the fools wearies each so much that he does not know how to get home," while a wise man would use better methods (cf. *v.* 10). Yet even to this there are two objections: (i) The vocalisation of the verb "know" ought to be that of the "imperfect" instead of the perfect (cf. Gen. xi. 7). (ii) We should expect the verse to follow *v.* 10, instead of being in a context that speaks of toil that is only mental. *The city* may be fairly paraphrased by "home," for there were no isolated cottages in Palestine as there are with us.

16 the city. Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a [1]child,
17 and thy princes eat in the morning! Happy art thou,

[1] Or, *servant*

(4) Barton explains that a fool's volubility wearies the man out who is inquiring from him the way to go to the city. But this is hardly worth saying.

16, 17. Frivolous and High-bred Rulers contrasted.

There is no apparent connexion with the preceding verses. But we are not justified in placing them, with Barton, after *v.* 5. Hitzig and Barton strangely work the verses in with their theories about iv. 13—16. See the Additional Note on that passage.

16. A young and frivolous king with sensual princes.

Woe to thee (iv. 10), *O land*] For some reason not apparent the LXX (followed by Pesh.) reads πόλις here, which not only yields a poor parallel to *v.* 17, but comes very harshly after the end of *v.* 15. Unless indeed the text of *v.* 15 is corrupt, which is not impossible.

when thy king is a child (*na'ar*)] (1) The margin "or, *servant*" is quite legitimate (e.g. Gen. xiv. 24; Num. xxii. 22), and is preferred by many commentators as affording a good contrast to "the son of nobles" in *v.* 17. In that case the king here would either have been a slave at some time, or a mere *parvenu*. "The history of the Persian Empire abounds with illustrations of the truth that persons raised from a state of slavery to the place of authority have generally proved the most terrible oppressors of their fellow-men" (Wright, p. 221). (2) There is however no need to leave the text of the R.V., which gives, after all, much the commonest meaning of the Heb. word, especially when we remember that the age intended by it is often much greater than in English (e.g. Gen. xxxiv. 19; 2 Sam. xviii. 5). Here the stress is on youthfulness, in which there is often much thoughtlessness and even selfishness (cf. Isa. iii. 4, 12).

and thy princes (x. 7)] Those in the king's counsels. Rehoboam's favourite counsellors were as young as he (1 K. xii. 8).

eat in the morning] Instead of attending to their duties, Jer. xxi. 12. The typical morning meal of the Oriental is very light. Contrast Isa. v. 11.

Morning revelling was looked upon naturally as the extreme of profligacy. So St Peter repudiates the charge of drunkenness on the ground that it was but "the third hour of the day," i.e. 9 a.m. (Acts ii. 15). So Cicero (*Philipp.* II. 41) emphasizes the fact "*ab horâ tertiâ bibebatur*." So Catullus (XLVII. 5):

Vos convivia lauta sumptuose
De die facitis.

"Ye from daybreak onward make
Your sumptuous feasts and revelry." (Plu.)

O land, when thy king is [1]the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness! By slothfulness the [2]roof sinketh in; and through 18

[1] Or, *a free man* [2] Or, *rafters sink*

17. A king of high breeding, with princes who put their duties first, eating indeed with heartiness but not drinking to excess.

when thy king is the son of nobles] The Heb. word for *nobles* occurs a few times in the O.T. (e.g. Isa. xxxiv. 12), but the phrase *the son of nobles* (*ben chôrîm*) here only. It is common in inscriptions of Northern Syria (naturally with *bar* for *ben*), so that it is to be considered an Aramaism. It is especially used of a freedman in contrast to a slave, e.g. "Kilix, freedman of Caesar" in a Palmyrene inscription of 137 A.D. (G. A. Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, No. 147, ii *b*, line 12), and also in the Mishna (*Gittin*, iv. 5), but here in its wider sense of a man of good birth. Apparently it has the connotation of corresponding character and behaviour, as we speak of "a gentleman."

eat in due season] Lit. "in the time." There is no exact parallel (Zeph. iii. 20 is probably corrupt), but cf. vii. 17. Here it means after their morning work, see *v.* 16, note.

for strength (ix. 16, note), *and not for drunkenness*] Although *for* has been defended by an appeal to Jon. i. 14, it is hardly possible. Two other renderings have been proposed: (1) "as strong men (cf. Isa. iii. 25) and not as drunkards," purposely contrasted with Isa. v. 22, "woe unto them that are mighty (lit. 'strong men') to drink wine." (2) More naturally, "with manliness (Ps. xc. 10) and not with carousal," the point being that although they have the appetites of strong and vigorous men, their interests do not lie in drinking bouts.

drunkenness] Though the root is common (e.g. vii. 2) the actual word occurs here only, and appears to be in the abstract, "drinking." A very similar form is found in Esth. i. 8.

18, 19. Two verses insisting on the need (*v.* 18) and the advantage (*v.* 19) of work. They thus form a pendant, in more general terms, to the description of the self-indulgent and self-effacing rulers of *vv.* 16, 17.

18. Through laziness the very roof sinks and the rain drips through. Possibly also the metaphor of the house is applied to the dynasty, the welfare of which depends on the personal character of the ruler (cf. Amos ix. 11).

By slothfulness] The Heb. word is in the dual number, and duals are so scarce in Heb., save of such few things as are two by nature (e.g. eyes and ears) that their meaning is often disputed. Here it is a question whether the author means, (1) a sluggish pair (of hands), see G.-K. § 88 *b*, or (2) slothfulness in a high degree, which makes the second half of the verse rather a bathos. (3) It is

19 idleness of the hands the house leaketh. A feast is made

however still better to get rid of the dual altogether by supposing the last two letters, which form the dual, to represent by dittography the first two letters of the next word. There will then remain the short word for sluggishness found in Prov. xxxi. 27 ("idleness" in the English versions). In this case no high degree of the fault is implied.

the roof] The substantive (*mqâreh*) occurs here only, but is akin to *qôrāh*, "a wooden beam" (2 K. vi. 2). It is generally interpreted as the whole collection of beam-work supporting the flat roof of an Eastern house, and the only place (we are told) where wood is used.

sinketh in] An excellent rendering, for there is nothing to commend the "decayeth" of the A.V. The verb occurs elsewhere only in Ps. cvi. 43; Job xxiv. 24, in a metaphorical sense.

and] This is in part the consequence of the preceding. If the supports of a flat roof are allowed to sag, the heavy rain of a Palestine winter will soon come through. But also if the yearly attention of rolling, etc., is not given to the outside "flooring" of the roof the same result will take place.

through idleness of the hands] The word for *idleness* or "slackness" occurs here only. But the root is in *v.* 6, xii. 4. For the thought see iv. 5; Prov. x. 4.

the house leaketh] The "droppeth through" of the A.V. doubtless means the same, though it is ambiguous in modern English. The verb occurs only in Job xvi. 20 (of tears); Ps. cxix. 28 (figuratively), but the substantive is found in Prov. xix. 13, xxvii. 15. On the former of these two passages Del. writes: "An Arab proverb, which I once heard from Wetzstein, says that there are three things which make the house intolerable: *âltaḳḳ* (=*âldhalf*), the trickling through of rain; *âlmaḳḳ*, the contention of the wife; and *âlbaḳḳ*, bugs."

19. As *v.* 18 warned against sloth, so this verse encourages to work. For though laughter as the result of food and drink is all very well, yet money gained by work meets everything. The verse presents another side of the truth stated in ix. 7.

Quite a different sense could be extracted from the verse if it immediately followed *v.* 16, where some would place it, viz. selfish rulers think food and wine are only for merriment, and that money can buy everything. But in the present position of the verse this meaning is very inferior.

A feast] Literally "bread," but in the O.T., as it seems (as against Talmudic usage), the verb "make" is never used of bread in our sense of making bread. Hence it is better to take the phrase *either* of preparing food (i.e. the solid food of a meal in which bread was the chief constituent), and so in Ezek. iv. 15, and this is preferable, *or*, possibly, of making a feast, as in Dan. v. 1. But this would include wine.

for laughter, and wine maketh glad the life: and money answereth all things. Curse not the king, no, not in thy 20

is made] A right paraphrase of the Heb. which is literally, "they make." Some commentators have wrongly thought the subject was the princes, etc. of *v.* 16.

and wine maketh glad] On the whole this is to be taken as a separate clause, and not "and wine that maketh glad" (Ps. civ. 15).

the life] ii. 17, ix. 9. Possibly "the living," iv. 2.

and (or, "but") *money answereth all things*] The phrase is difficult, but this translation is right if it means that money meets all desires (cf. Hos. ii. 21). So Symm. ἀργύριον δὲ εὐχρηστήσει εἰς πάντα. Levy, referring to Gen. xli. 16, would translate, Money reveals all, i.e. plays the oracle in the eyes of the ungodly. In illustration of the true meaning the following passages are commonly quoted:

> O cives, cives, quaerenda pecunia primumst;
> Virtus post nummos.
>
> "Money, my townsmen, must be sought for first;
> Virtue comes after guineas."
>
> Isne tibi melius suadet, qui "rem facias, rem,
> Si possis, recte, si non, quocunque modo, rem?"
>
> "Does he give better counsel whom we hear,
> 'Make money, money; justly if you can,
> But if not, then in any way, make money'?"
>
> HOR. *Epp.* I. i. 53, 65.
>
> Scilicet uxorem cum dote, fidemque, et amicos,
> Et genus, et formam, regina Pecunia donat;
> Ac bene nummatum decorat Suadela Venusque.
>
> "Seek'st thou a dowried wife, or friends, or trust,
> Beauty or rank, Queen Money gives thee all;
> Put money in thy purse, and thou shalt lack
> Nor suasive power nor comeliness of form."
>
> HOR. *Epp.* I. 6. 36—38.

20. Neither think nor speak evil of those in power, for it will be known.

The connexion with the context is not obvious, but the verse may stand in some loose connexion with *vv.* 16, 17, as a warning against speaking against individuals. There does not seem to be any reference to government spies, as some commentators have supposed.

Curse not (vii. 21 *sq.*) *the king* (no article, and it is not necessary even in English), *no, not in thy thought*] The Heb. word translated "thought" means knowledge elsewhere in the Bible (2 Chr. i. 10,

thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter.

11 [1]Cast thy bread [2]upon the waters: for thou shalt

[1] Or, *Send forth* [2] Heb. *upon the face of the waters.*

11, 12; Dan. i. 4, 17), but here the place in which knowledge is found, i.e. the mind or thought. It is an Aramaism. The whole sentence is an hyperbole, but hyperbole is common in proverbial sayings (vi. 3, 6). For the sake of parallelism the rendering "in thy study-chamber" has been proposed, but no clear example of this is found, save perhaps in the Targum of Ps. lxviii. 12. An emendation "in thy bed" (*bmatzā'akā* for *bmadā'akā*) has also been proposed for the same reason (see Isa. xxviii. 20), but unnecessarily.

and curse not the rich (x. 6, a powerful man to whom his slaves and friends report everything) *in thy bedchamber* (2 K. vi. 12, but the phrase here is in the plural).

for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings (lit. "the owner of wings"; cf. *v.* 11, note, "the charmer") *shall* (rather, "may") *tell the matter* (or, "word")] The Eng. saying, "A little bird has told me," is probably derived from this passage, but the simile is common. Plu. and others quote

οὐδεὶς οἶδεν τὸν θησαυρὸν τὸν ἐμὸν πλὴν εἴ τις ἄρ' ὄρνις.

"No one knows my treasure, save, perchance, some bird."

ἡ κωρώνη μοι πάλαι
ἄνω τι φράζει.

"Long since the raven tells me from on high."
(Aristoph. *Birds*, ll. 601, 49).

The Midrash, *Eccles. Rabba*, says on the last clause—"because the wall has ears."

Chapter XI.

1—8. Further examples for encouragement of foresight and prudence. Venture and work. Qoh. illustrates his subject from commerce (*vv.* 1, 2), agriculture (*vv.* 3, 4), the development of the unborn babe (*v.* 5), agriculture again (*v.* 6). Rejoice in life, for death will follow. Every man who comes is a mere breath (*vv.* 7, 8).

1. Trust your goods to the dangers of the sea.

Cast thy bread upon the waters] *Cast* is impossible as a strict translation, for the verb, in the intensive voice found here, never means to throw[1]. The margin "Send forth" is alone right.

[1] Although the Piel of שִׁלַּח in 1 K. ix. 7 ("dismiss") is, in fact, represented by the Hiphil of שָׁלַךְ in 2 Chron. vii. 20.

find it after many days. [1]Give a portion to seven, yea, 2

[1] Or, *Divide a portion into seven, yea, even into eight*

(1) This points to the true explanation of the verse; send forth bravely that which ought to be thy support, in commercial ventures in ships on the face of the waters. It will not be lost. For a complementary expression see Prov. xxxi. 14.

(2) A more common explanation, disregarding the meaning of the verb, makes the verse an incitement to charity. Cast thy bread far and wide, you will lose nothing by doing so. And a superficial interpretation of *v.* 2 is made to support this. It is further alleged that the biscuit-like form of Eastern bread makes the metaphor more easy, because, being flat, it floats like a chip of wood (Hos. x. 7 (R.V. mg. "twigs")), and may, with a very large element of chance, be thrown up on the land. Even so, nothing is said about its retaining its good qualities!

(3) Akin to this but in a similar sense is the explanation, throw your bread where it will be quite useless—it will not be lost. The advice is a paradox.

(4) Jer. explains the verse as an exhortation to charity, but finds the figure of speech that of one who sows seed on well watered soil, "*qui super irrigua seminat, fructum sementis expectat.*" Hence some later authors have perceived a simile from sowing rice, which is cast into fields actually covered with water. But "cast" is not "sow" and the Heb. word is never so used. And rice is never mentioned in the Bible.

upon the waters] The marginal rendering, "Heb. *upon the face of the waters*," might as well have been in the text. The phrase is fairly common, with the Heb. exactly the same as here (Gen. i. 2, vii. 18; Ex. xxxii. 20), or very nearly so (Job xxiv. 18, xxvi. 10; Isa. xviii. 2). It here suggests the storms and waves that the ship will encounter. The full phrase shows that "beside the waters" is not meant, as in Isa. xxxii. 20.

for thou shalt find it after many days] There is no question, it will be observed, of finding further profit upon the capital sent out in commerce. It is sufficient for the author to urge that by the venture no loss will be incurred—in spite of the length of time before the issue of the venture is seen.

It is worth noting that (1) the verse is quoted in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* as though it was a part of Ecclus; (2) the same *Alphabet* has a saying also ascribed to Ben Sira, "The son who is not clear-witted, leave him upon the surface (or, 'face') of the water and let him swim (trade)." See Cowley and Neubauer, *The original Hebrew of a portion of Ecclesiasticus*, 1897, pp. xxviii *sq.*

2. Yet exercise prudence. Divide your capital into several ventures, for you do not know what may happen upon earth.

Give a portion] We are so accustomed to see in this verse an exhortation to give charity profusely, and without the nice calcula-

even unto eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be
3 upon the earth. If the clouds be full of rain, they empty
themselves upon the earth: and if a tree fall [1] toward the

[1] Or, *in*

tion of less or more, that it is difficult to regard it impartially in its context, but it is much more in accordance with Qoh.'s usual thoughts to encourage to a prudent use of property. So Jacob halved his belongings when meeting Esau (Gen. xxxii. 7). Yet we must not accept the translation of the margin, "Divide a portion into," for there is no parallel to this. The phrase *give a portion* recurs in a different sense in ii. 21, of handing over a father's share of this world's goods to his son. But Josh. xiv. 4, xv. 13 are so far akin to our passage that they speak of the handing over of portions of the land to tribes.

to seven, yea, even unto eight] "Such an arrangement of numbers in a literary figure is frequent in Biblical Heb. Thus 'once' and 'twice' occur in Job xxxiii. 14; Ps. lxii. 11; 'twice' and 'thrice' Job xxxiii. 29; 'two' and 'three' Isa. xvii. 6; 'three' and 'four' Amos i. 3, 6, 11, 13, ii. 1, 4, 6; Prov. xxx. 15, 18, 21; Ex. xx. 5, xxxiv. 7; 'four' and 'five' Isa. xvii. 6; ['six' and 'seven' Job v. 19]; 'seven' and 'eight' Mic. v. 5; 'nine' and 'ten,' Ecclus. xxv. 7" (Barton). It means here, Do not be punctilious about the exact number; incline to more rather than to less.

The Targ. (in the Yemen text) sees an exhortation to sow both in Tishri (the seventh month, September—October) and in Kislev (the ninth month, November—December), for one knows not which sowing will turn out best. But as a translation this is very unnatural.

for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth] The Heb. is literally "what shall be evil upon the earth," and may perhaps mean "what part you give shall prove unsuccessful." But the paraphrase of the R.V. is probably right. You cannot foresee what ill may come upon the earth. Therefore send out your goods to different parts. Do not put your eggs all into one basket. Those commentators who refer the verse to deeds of charity explain this, *either*, You do not know where your gifts will be most needed; *or*, You do not know when you yourself will need help from these others. The last is not a very noble reason. Luke xvi. 9 has been compared with it rather unfairly.

3. The author has said (*v.* 2*b*) that there will inevitably be some evils. Here he adds, in confirmation of this, that causes produce their proper results.

If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves] It is preferable to translate, "If the clouds be full, they pour out rain." And so Vulg. The same word for rain is found in xii. 2. It is generally explained as heavy rain; cf. Cant. ii. 11. For "pour out," see Mal. iii. 10.

south, or [1]toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be. He that observeth the wind shall 4
not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.

[1] Or, *in*

and if a tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be] The meaning is plain, natural causes produce natural effects and we must take things as they are. A curious interpretation is given by Jer., that the words refer to a person: after his death he cannot change his state. But there is not the slightest hint of this in the context. It may be added that some Protestant writers have improved upon this by saying that as only the south (heaven) and the north (hell) are mentioned, a purgatory is excluded! McN. (followed by Barton) urges that as a tree can be moved by a man, the translation "a piece of wood," "a stick," is preferable, the thought being then of rhabdomancy, in which the direction in which a stick falls when thrown into the air determines the future. After the stick is thrown up the man has no control over the result. But the question of human agency does not come into the illustration of the fallen tree, and it is quite unnecessary to change the usual rendering.

there shall it be] The Heb. form of the verb is very strange, and most moderns think that "it" alone should be read—"There *is* it" (*hû'* for *yhû'*).

4. Do not be too anxious, and do not wait until success is absolutely assured. "Qui ne risque rien, n'a rien." No verse in the Bible contains more commonsense than this.

He that observeth] Lit. "one watching," cf. Isa. xxi. 11; Job xxiv. 15 (R.V. "waiteth for"). The participle connotes continuance and custom. And so with *he that regardeth*.

the wind] Idiomatic English, but the omission of the article in the Heb. has a connotation of contempt, "mere wind." Wind would affect sowing, (1) by being likely to bring rain (Prov. xxv. 23), (2) by blowing the seed beyond the limits of one's own strip of land.

and he that regardeth] The phrase implies earnestly gazing. And so in Cant. vi. 11.

the clouds] Whether the article was intended here by the writer we do not know. Probably it was not. But the Masoretic vocalisation has it. The clouds would be watched for fear they should bring rain (*v.* 3), which though rare in harvest, especially wheat harvest (1 Sam. xii. 17), is not unknown, for there are often a few wet days in April (when barley, lentils, and peas ripen) or even the beginning of May, the harvest months. Cf. Prov. xxvi. 1.

5. The methods of God (who makes all) are known to thee as little as the life-process of the unborn babe. For the marvel of this, see Ps. cxxxix. 13—17; cf. Ezek. xxxvii. 7—9.

5 As thou knowest not what is the way of the [1]wind, *nor*
how the bones *do grow* in the womb of her that is with
child; even so thou knowest not the work of God who
6 doeth all. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the

[1] Or, *spirit*

As thou knowest not] Again, the participle implying continuance in not knowing, in contrast to the possibility denied by the imperfect tense in "even so thou knowest not."

the way of the wind] The Heb. word has been suggested by *v.* 4, but its meaning is different here, for, with the right text of the next clause, we must accept the rendering of the margin "spirit," i.e. the life-giving power, as also possibly in viii. 8. Compare Job xxvii. 3; Zech. xii. 1.

nor *how the bones* do grow *in the womb of her that is with child*] Lit. "like bones in the womb," etc.

(1) However interesting as a paraphrase the R.V. (based on Vulg.) is, it is impossible as a translation, and so too Plu.'s, "how the framework of the body is in the womb of her that is with child," which without any disguise treats the particle of comparison as a conjunction affecting the whole sentence. But it is never so used.

(2) McN., following Del., renders "As thou knowest not what is the way of the wind, as the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so thou knowest not," etc. This indeed is accurate, but involves a singularly harsh and sudden change of subject.

(3) It is therefore preferable to add a "tittle" (Matt. v. 18), and read "with" instead of "like" (ב for כ), when the translation will be, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit with the bones in the womb," etc. This is the reading of forty manuscripts, and is accepted by Targ., Jer. (as it seems), Dr. in Kittel, Levy, Pod. The growth of the embryo is attributed to the energy of God.

even so thou knowest not the work of God who doeth all] Cf. iii. 11 (note, "everything").

6. Therefore use every opportunity, for you never know which effort will turn out well, or whether all may not do so. In ix. 10 energy in work is also enjoined, but with quite a different reason added.

In the morning sow thy seed] Agriculture was the chief occupation of Jews, and also (as Del. says) is the prototype of all labour (Gen. ii. 15).

and in the evening] Although a different preposition is used from that of the preceding clause the same phrase is translated "at even" in Gen. xlix. 27 (compare also viii. 11), and may be so rendered here. It has been objected that the Psalmist (Ps. civ. 23) implies that man's work ceases when evening has come—but

evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. Truly the light is sweet, and a 7

so obvious a truism cannot prevent a writer from comparing morning and evening work. Yet many commentators (e.g. Del., McN.) render "till evening" (cf. John ix. 4) which not only is rather prosaic, but is also a strain on the Heb. preposition (in Job iv. 20, "from morning to evening," R.V. margin, the form of the Heb. sentence is different).

withhold not thine hand] Lit. "Put not thine hand down"—the same verb as in vii. 9 ("resteth"). The allusion is to the continual stretching out of the arm in sowing broadcast. See also Ex. xvii. 11, of Moses' hands let down in prayer. For a purely metaphorical use of a similar phrase see Josh. x. 6.

for thou knowest not (participle, cf. *v.* 5) *which* (ii. 3, note, p. 18) *shall prosper* (see x. 10, last note), or, perhaps, "shall turn out right."

or whether they both shall be alike good] Be not even satisfied although it is certain that the early sowing succeeds.

Although youth and old age are not really contemplated here by Qoh. Jer.'s homiletical adaptation of the thought may be quoted: "*Nec dicas: dum potui, laboravi: debeo in senectute requiescere. Nescis enim utrum in iuventute, an in aetate longaevâ placeas Deo.*" Similarly R. Ishmael says in *Eccles. R.* on our verse, "If thou hast learned Torah in thy youth, learn it in thy old age, for thou knowest not which will abide (with thee)." There is no reason, we may add, to see any direct reference in this verse to showing charity to others.

7, 8. The author here follows his usual custom (ii. 24, iii. 12 *sq.*, 22, v. 18 (17), viii. 14 *sq.*, ix. 7) of affixing to a statement of the powerlessness of man in view of Nature an exhortation to enjoy life. The light is sweet and the sun is good; rejoice in all the days of even a long life, and the more for remembering that many days of darkness will follow it.

7. *Truly*] Unpardonable as a translation, for the word is only "and," but the meaning of this is very uncertain.

(1) "And so," i.e. if the advice of the preceding verses is followed then indeed will the light be sweet, etc. Compare Phil. iv. 7. But earlier statements about seeing the sun (vi. 5, vii. 11) hardly suggest moral advantage here.

(2) "And yet," i.e. in contrast to man's powerlessness. One would have expected a stronger expression.

(3) Simply "and." There is another point to be remembered as one thinks of work (*vv.* 1—6); there is room for happiness. On the whole this is the best interpretation.

(4) Yet we must not forget the possibility of the verses having originally belonged to another context and the presence of the "and" being almost overlooked.

8 pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun. [1]Yea, if a man live many years, let him rejoice in them all; [2]but let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many. All that cometh is vanity.

[1] Or, *For* [2] Or, *and remember*

the light is sweet] Plu. quotes Theognis contemplating death:

κείσομαι ὥστε λίθος
ἄφθογγος, λείψω δ' ἐρατὸν φάος ἠελίοιο.

"Then shall I lie, as voiceless as a stone,
And see no more the loved light of the sun." *Eleg.* I. 568 *sq.*

8. *Yea*] A rare meaning of the particle (*kî*) here used, and it is doubtful whether it should not be "restricted to cases in which a suppressed clause may be understood" (*Oxford Lexicon*, p. 472 *b*), of which there is no question here. Hence the marginal "For" is to be accepted. With "For, if" compare Ex. viii. 21 (17), (English versions "Else, if").

many years] Compare vi. 6; long life without enjoyment is worthless.

let him rejoice] This is preferable to making the apodosis begin with the next clause, as the A.V. does ("*and* rejoice").

but] Probably the right translation of the simple conjunction "and."

let him remember the days of darkness] ii. 13, last note. The days are not those of tribulation or even old age, but of the after life. See Job x. 21 *sq.*

All that cometh is vanity] A difficult clause.

(1) The exact Heb. phrase for *that cometh* (*shebbā'*) is used of a person in v. 16 (15) ("as he came," R.V.), and, on the whole, this is preferable here. The meaning then will be that, One lives in happiness for a comparatively short time; every one, in fact, is a mere breath.

(2) Yet in this book, when *all* is found with *vanity* (i. 2 and often), it always refers to things. Possibly it may mean, Days in this life are vanity. Compare Isa. xxvii. 6, where "days" must be supplied (see xxxix. 6; Jer. xvi. 14, xxiii. 5).

(3) Most modern commentators interpret it of things in the future after death. Anything and everything that happens then is "vanity," regarded, of course, from the standpoint of this life, without reference to the fuller knowledge of the Christian. But "vanity" seems never to be used of anything after this life[1].

[1] It should be noticed also that the Talmudic use of *lhabba'* or *labbā'* has no special reference to the hereafter. The phrase *Mikkā'n ulhabbā'* in T.B. *Sanhedrin*, *27 a* (quoted by Del.) means that a person is disqualified as a witness *from now and in future* (see Jastrow, p. 134 *b*). It seems to be entirely different from the common term for the Messianic or supramundane future expressed by *le'āthîd lābô'*.

Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart 9
cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways

(4) It is very improbable that the reference is to the past events of life (Targ., Vulg., Luther). Plu. illustrates the whole verse from Horace, *Od.* I. iv.

> Nunc decet aut viridi nitidum caput impedire myrto
> Aut flore, terrae quem ferunt solutae.
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> Pallida Mors aequo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas
> Regumque turres. O beate Sesti,
> Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam.
> Iam te premet nox, fabulaeque Manes
> Et domus exilis Plutonia.
>
> "Now is it meet to crown bright brow
> With wreaths of fresh green myrtle; now,
> With flowers that owe their timely birth
> To spring's soft influence o'er the earth.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> With equal foot the pauper's cell
> Death visits, and where emperors dwell,
> Wherefore my Sextus, good and dear,
> Life's little span forbids us here
> To start, if we indeed are wise,
> On some far-reaching enterprise:
> Soon Night and fabled forms of dread,
> Where Pluto lords it o'er the dead,
> Shall meet thee in thy narrow bed."

9—xii. **8**. The author takes up the warning of *vv.* 7, 8 and enlarges upon it. But, *more suo,* he regards the subject from a fresh standpoint, notably in xii. 1—8 speaking of the trials of old age. Enjoy life, bearing in mind God's judgement (*v.* 9), for life is short (*v.* 10). Remember Him while you are young and vigorous, until energy fails (xii. 1). Such failing of the various parts of a man is described in detail under figures of speech (*vv.* 2--5). Then death itself as an event (*v.* 6), and its immediate consequence, separation of body and spirit (*v.* 7). Summary of all life; it is a breath (*v.* 8).

9. The author, without any irony but quite seriously, bids a young man enjoy his youth and its pleasures, taking heed to the warning that for them all God will judge him.

thy youth...thy youth] The two Heb. words differ, the first (*v.* 10; Ps. cx. 3 †) referring to age, the second (xii. 1, and, as it seems, Num. xi. 28 †) to appearance, being another form of the root of the word translated *O young man.*

let thy heart cheer thee] The causative form of "is made glad"

of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know

(vii. 3, note). It is the same word as "good" or "pleasure" in ii. 1 and often.

and walk in the ways of thine heart] (Cf. Isa. lvii. 17). This was one of the passages to which the early Rabbis objected (*Eccles. R.* on i. 3), on the ground that it is contrary to Num. xv. 39, "and that ye go not about after your own heart and your own eyes." But this refers to faithfulness in ceremonial observances in contrast to idolatrous worship[1]. And in any case the Rabbis were satisfied when they were reminded of the end of the verse. The LXX (B) gets over the difficulty by reading καὶ περιπάτει ἐν ὁδοῖς ἄμωμος, "and walk in thy ways blameless," and by inserting a negative in the next clause ("and not in the sight," etc.).

the sight of] The sing. as in vi. 9, and so a hundred MSS., all the versions except Targ., and most commentators, when the meaning will be that of Job xxxi. 7. But the reading of the "written" (as contrasted with the "read") text is the plur., "the sights of." Del. prefers this, finding a similar plur. in the Heb. of Cant. ii. 14; Dan. i. 15. It then means "the multitude of the objects which delight the eyes." But the sing. is more natural.

but know] The words from here to the end of the verse are an addition by the Editor (see Introd. p. xxv). Here again we see the ambiguity of the simple conjunction, usually translated "and."

(1) Levy, following Grätz and Tyler, argues that it means, "Enjoy yourself and bear in mind that if you do not use your opportunities for pleasure God will judge you for your mistaken asceticism," and many passages in Talmudic writings are adduced in favour of this interpretation, the most noticeable being a saying quoted in the name of Rab (3rd cent. A.D., T.J. *Qiddushin*, at the very end), "Man will have to give account for all that his eye saw and did not enjoy (lit. 'eat')." Similarly, T.B. *Erubin*, 54*a*, "Samuel said to R. Judah, Thou clever fellow, grasp and eat, grasp and drink, for the world which we leave is like a marriage canopy (which is quickly taken down). Rab said to R. Hamnuna, My son if thou hast anything, give thyself good cheer, for there is no delight in Sheol, and death has no delay." (This is a quotation from Ecclus. xiv. 11.) In favour of this are Job xi. 6; Ps. xlvi. 10, where "and know" has no adversative sense, but only draws out the consequence. The old versions translate literally.

(2) Yet it is difficult to resist the impression that the passage is too solemn. "And know" comes so suddenly and vigorously that it suggests a contrast to the preceding. Hence it is probable that the Eng. versions, and the great majority of commentators, are right in rendering the phrase "but know." However much

[1] It may be noted that Plu. is wrong in saying that those words are in the passages contained in the Phylacteries. For these are Ex. xiii. 1—10, 11—16; Deut. vi. 4—9, xi. 13—21.

thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement. Therefore remove [1]sorrow from thy heart, and 10
put away evil from thy flesh: for youth and the prime

[1] Or, *vexation* Or, *provocation*

you enjoy life, yet let there be at the back of your mind all the time, the certainty of God's judgement upon you in your use or abuse of them. See also xii. 14.

for all these things God will bring thee into judgement] The traditional vocalisation of the Heb. consonants gives "the judgement." But this in itself does not prove that the author was thinking of the great and final Judgement. For the definite article is used in Job ix. 32, xxii. 4 where this is certainly not intended, and it is not used in Job xiv. 3, "and bringest me into judgement with Thee."

Hence we are free to ask whether the judgement is in this life or after this life, and the answer is not easy. In favour of the former is the general outlook of the book. So in ii. 26 God gives to the man that pleaseth Him, and to the sinner, due rewards in this life, and in viii. 12 *sq.* they that love God and fear before Him are better off than they who do not, probably but not quite certainly also in this life.

In favour of the latter is iii. 17, which perhaps, but not certainly, refers to the future, and, of course, xii. 14, about which there is no serious doubt. On the whole, this interpretation is to be preferred, for the words imply that a judgement by God is, as it were, hanging over each man, and suggest something more than a verdict to take effect in mature life or old age. But we should hardly have felt this if it had not been for xii. 14. See further, Introd. pp. xliii—xlv.

10. The first half is the negative of *v.* 9 *a*; Put away all that injures mind and body, for youth and manhood flee fast away.

sorrow] i. 18 (note, "grief"). Here it is any sort of vexation. The saying, *Tristitiam, si potes, cave ne admiseris*, is attributed by Knobel to Publilius Syrus (*flor.* 44 B.C.), but it does not occur in Bickford-Smith's edition of the *Sententiae*, 1895.

and put away evil from thy flesh] The evil is bodily ill of every kind, of which the effect of laziness depicted in iv. 5 (see note) is one example.

for youth (*v.* 9, note) *and the prime of life*] The Heb. word for *prime of life* is *shacharûth*, which occurs here only. It may possibly be connected with *shachar*, "dawn," see the title of Ps. xxii., in which case our word would mean early childhood, but much more probably with *shāchôr* "black," referring to the hair. So in Cant. v. 11 the ideal Lover is said to have locks "black as a raven." Similarly in the Mishna and Midrash a term for "men" is "they who are black of head" (*Nedarim*, III. 8 [9]).

12 of life are vanity. Remember also thy Creator in the days

are vanity] Youth and even full manhood soon pass away.

Chapter XII.

1. The thought of xi. 9 *sq.* is continued, the positive side of religion being emphasised in contrast to the negative side in xi. 9 *b*. There, Do not forget that a judgement is to come; here, keep God always in mind during thy days of health, before old age comes on.

On the question of the authorship of xi. 9 *b* and the first half of this verse, see Introd. pp. xxiv *sq.*

Remember also] "Remember now" (A.V.). Either rendering gives the quite mistaken suggestion that a new subject begins here. This is not the case. The subject is in continuation of the two immediately preceding verses, and the connexion is expressed as simply as possible—"And remember." To "remember" God is not a very common phrase, but occurs in all parts of the Bible (Deut. viii. 18; Judg. viii. 34; 2 Sam. xiv. 11; Neh. iv. 14; Ps. lxxvii. 3; Isa. lvii. 11; Jon. ii. 7; Zech. x. 9). Warnings against forgetting God occur very frequently.

thy Creator] The English substantive occurs elsewhere in the A.V. and, as it seems, in the R.V., of the O.T. only in Isa. xl. 28, xliii. 15, though the Heb. participle so translated here is not uncommon (e.g. Isa. xliii. 1). This designation of God was chosen as laying stress on Him as the ultimate cause and designer of our bodily frame, of which the inherent weakness and transitoriness are emphasised. It suggests that the clay must not find fault with the potter, and that He ought to be the object of our regard whatever comes[1].

in the days of thy youth] The same word is used as for the second "youth" in xi. 9, where see note.

[1] The form of the Heb. word here is unique. For as found in the accepted text (Ginsburg) it is in the plur. Several MSS. indeed, and all the old versions, have the sing., but the testimony of the versions is useless in this case, for they could only translate by the sing., and that of those MSS. may reasonably be suspected as a method of avoiding a serious difficulty. Apparently plur. forms of "maker" when used of God occur in Isa. xxii. 11, liv. 5; Ps. cxlix. 2, but the Heb. word in those instances possesses as its *root* the same consonant (*yôd*) which is generally the sign of the plural, so that the plur. form there is not certain. In the word for *Creator* however there is properly no *yôd* in the root. Possibly the *yôd* here present may be due to an unconscious imitation of verbs which have the *yôd* (as is not uncommon), but it is preferable to see here another example of the use of the plur. of excellency (v. 11 (10), note), connoting that there is one Creator, and one only, who is Supreme.

A Rabbi (not, as it seems, R. Aqiba who was martyred about 132 A.D. but R. Levi of the end of the third century A.D.; see Bacher, *Die Agada der Tannaiten*, I. p. 413, note) expounding the form homiletically said, Remember thy physical origin (*b'êrka*, "thy source"), thy grave (*bôrka*,

of thy youth, or ever the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; or ever the sun, and the light, and the moon, and 2

or ever] The phrase is not negative, dissuading from a course of action, but positive, enjoining it until something in the future takes place. In *vv.* 1—6 it marks three stages of the writer's thought: (*a*) Here a man is bid remember God up to the time that old age comes upon him; (*b*) *v.* 2, it occurs at the beginning of the first two similes of old age; and (*c*) *v.* 6, at the beginning of the similes of death. Compare the Egyptian *Lay of the Harper* (*vide supra*, ix. 8, note, "and let not thy head lack ointment"), "Follow thy desire and thy pleasure...till that day of lamentation cometh to thee, when the stilled heart hears not their mourning: for lamentation calls back no man from the tomb."

the evil days come] The years of old age with its normal inconvenience and suffering. There is no hint of the evils that are the consequence of sin, as Ginsburg supposes.

and the years draw nigh, when (or, "of which") *thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them*] The emphasis is on "pleasure," by its position at the end. There is the vision of many weary years in which life has lost all its charm. For "pleasure," see *v.* 10 (note, "acceptable words"). Aq., with his over-punctiliousness, gives the term the same sense here (πρᾶγμα) as rightly belongs to it in iii. 1 (see note).

2. The first simile. Old age, or decrepitude if this comes before old age, is compared to dark and stormy winter weather, such an experience as that of Acts xxvii. 20. There can hardly be any reference to the week of bad weather at the end of February in Palestine, for, trying though it is, it is the immediate precursor of spring.

It is quite a mistake to see here a detailed allegory of the failure of human powers. The Targ. for example, says *the sun* means the glorious brightness of the face, *the light* is the light of the eyes, *the moon* is the beauty of the cheeks, *the stars* are the pupils of the eyes, and *the clouds* are the eyelids dripping with tears. Even Plu., essentially following Del., goes beyond probabilities when he writes, "The sun may be the Spirit, the Divine light of the body, the moon as the Reason that reflects that light, the stars as the senses that give but a dim light in the absence of sun and moon."

the sun, and the light (i.e. by day), *and the moon, and the stars* (at night), *be darkened*. Compare Isa. xiii. 10; Ezek. xxxii. 7 *sq.*

"thy pit"), thy Creator (*bôr'eyka*) before whom thou must hand in thy reckoning. See T. J. *Sota*, II. 2, p. 18 *a*, and *Eccles. R.* on our passage.

Some modern commentators (e.g. Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, pp. 225, 300) would even read *bôrka* or *b'erka*, and explain it as "Remember thy wife" (cf. Prov. v. 15, 18; Cant. iv. 12, 15), but there is nothing in the immediate context to suggest this. To make *vv.* 5—7 an expansion of it is absurd.

the stars, be darkened, and the clouds return after the
3 rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall
tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and

and the clouds return after the rain] Storm succeeds storm. After a storm in summer sun and moon soon reappear. Not so in winter and old age.

3—5. The serious differences in interpretation begin with *v.* 3, the chief question being whether the passage is to be understood literally or metaphorically.

(1) The former interpretation is urged by Dr C. Taylor, who takes *vv.* 1—7 as a Dirge for the Dead, descriptive of the effect that a death has upon the other members of the household, including however the use of metaphors in *v.* 6. See his *Dirge of Coheleth*, 1874.

(2) The metaphorical explanation is more probable, describing old age in various physiological respects and with great variety in the nature and minuteness of the allegory. Yet we are not justified in calling it, with Dr Taylor, "the anatomical rendering," even if the rather gross interpretations of details by certain ancient and modern commentators be accepted. For *v.* 2 cannot be taken literally, nor can *vv.* 4 *b*, 5 *a*, *b*, if the reference is to others than the aged, nor is *v.* 6 susceptible of other than a metaphorical meaning. Figure and symbol are so very common in Oriental poetry that if there is doubt it is safer to believe that the poet intended them rather than bald statements of fact.

3. *in the day when*] So Cant. viii. 8. It is more vivid than our simple "when." In Isa. xxx. 26 almost the same phrase is a formula of transition, as here. Dr Taylor renders it excellently, "Namely, in the day that."

the keepers of the house] The phrase is unique, though 2 K. xi. 5; Ezek. xl. 45; 1 Esdras i. 16, speak of persons guarding the Temple. Compare also Ps. lxxxiv. 10. Presumably the figure is that of servants whose duty it was to guard the entrances. They represent the hands and arms (Aben Ezra).

shall tremble] Or "quake." The Heb. word means to move, especially in fear. It occurs only in Esth. v. 9 of Mordecai not rising and "moving" when Haman passed, and in the causative in Hab. ii. 7. But in the Aram. of Daniel it is used of people trembling before Nebuchadnezzar (v. 19), and before "the God of Daniel" (vi. 26).

and the strong men] While physical strength, and particularly physical valour, are often connoted by the Heb. phrase (Judg. iii. 29), the reference to mental and moral efficiency is also found (Gen. xlvii. 6). In itself the latter meaning would be probable here, the reference then being to men of influence and position, i.e. the owners of the house. But the accompanying verb suggests the former interpretation, although it is difficult to see what position these men of physical strength hold when they are not *the keepers of the house*. They represent the legs (Aben Ezra).

the [1]grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall 4

[1] Or, *grinding women*

shall bow themselves] Rather "get crooked," i. 15, note. Contrast the uprightness of the legs in the metaphor of "pillars of marble" (Cant. v. 15). For this and other details compare 3 Macc. iv. 5, "old men, covered with their wealth of grey hairs,... their feet bent, and sluggish from old age."

and the grinders] The margin must be accepted, "the grinding women." In Palestine the women of the household grind every morning enough corn for the day's bread. Compare Ex. xi. 5; Isa. xlvii. 2; Matt. xxiv. 41; *Odyssey*, xx. 105—110.

They here stand for the teeth.

cease] Here not "cease to exist," but "cease from work," "are (or, 'shall be') idle." Compare Mishna, *Ethics of the Fathers*, i. 5 (6), "and desists from the words of the Law." It occurs six times in the Aram. of Ezra (e.g. iv. 24), and is common in Assyrian.

because they are few] There would be no doubt about this translation if the vocalisation of the verb were that of the *simple* (Qal) form (Isa. xxi. 17; Jer. xxix. 6, xxx. 19), but it is in the intensive (Piel), which occurs here only in the Bible. It may merely strengthen the meaning of the Qal, "because they are very few" (G.-K. § 52 *k*), or it may have a causative sense, as in Ecclus. iii. 18, "make thy soul (i.e. thyself) little." If so, the image is that of the women producing but little corn. On philological grounds this is more probable (C. Taylor).

The teeth give up work because they can do so little.

and those that look out of the windows] As menservants and (as it seems) masters have already been mentioned, so after the maidservants at the mill come the ladies. These in the East can go out but rarely, and spend much time looking out of the lattices (Hos. xiii. 3 [R.V. "chimney"]; Isa. lx. 8; cf. Judg. v. 28; 2 Sam. vi. 16, where however different Heb. words are employed).

be darkened] A quite senseless expression if used of the ladies, but intelligible enough if the reference is directly to what they signify, viz., the eyes (see Gen. xxvii. 1, and often). For in old age eyes "lose their lustre and their sight" (Barton). If the simile be pressed closely the window will be the whole eye, and the lady the pupil, but this is perhaps going too far. There is no suggestion of Cicero's deeper thought, that it is not the eye or the ear that sees and hears, but only the mind behind them, *non eas partes, quae quasi fenestrae sunt animi* (*Tuscul. Disp.* i. xx. 46). Elsewhere he compares the eyes to watchmen in a citadel,

Sensus autem, interpretes ac nuntii rerum, in capite tanquam in arce mirifice ad usus necessarios et facti et collocati sunt. Nam oculi tanquam speculatores altissimum locum obtinent, ex quo plurima conspicientes fungantur suo munere (*De Nat. Deor.* ii. 140.)

be shut in the street; when the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all

4. As with the eyes, so with the ears. Under the figures of the daily life of a house are shown the disabilities of old age as regards deafness.

and the doors shall be shut in the street; when the sound of the grinding is low] The semicolon of the R.V. is gratuitous, and contrary to the Heb. accentuation, which is rightly followed by the A.V., and even more plainly by the Jewish American Version which sets the semicolon after *low*. The second clause is closely connected with the first. Grinding the corn in the early morning is performed by two women, and if, as very often, there is only one in the household, she throws open the doors and calls in her neighbour. The time is therefore one of friendliness and gossip. But if there is very little to grind the doors are shut. Illness and fast-approaching death are no time for merriment. The two-leaved doors opening on the public street are shut, and as little grinding as possible is done. It is hardly heard. Grinding and the lamp show that a house is inhabited, Jer. xxv. 10 *sq.*; Apoc. xviii. 22 *sq.*

The interpretation is doubtful. But the dual form for "doors" suggests something that is double. Many commentators think of the jaws (Job xli. 14) and the grinding as the mastication of food, but this has been sufficiently dealt with in *v.* 3. Others think of the lips and the grinding as the words that issue from them. Pod. quotes in illustration Mme de Sévigné, Jan. 26th, 1680, "La Bury fait fort joliment tourner son moulin à paroles." It is, however, forced and trivial to think of the old man's mouth being so drawn back that it is almost shut up between his nose and his chin, with the consequent feebleness of his speech. But probably *the doors* are the ears, which in old age are partly closed to sounds. The *street* is mentioned because the ears form the doors by which communication is made from without.

The effect of deafness is then described in three particulars, the first of which is that the words of others seem *low*.

and one shall rise up at the voice of a bird] (1) No satisfactory explanation has been given of the received Heb. text. The translation of it is right—for Dr C. Taylor's, "and the bird rises to (or 'for') voice," i.e. sets up a screech in bad omen, is impossible. But the meaning of the text is unintelligible. The usual explanation is that the old man sleeps so lightly that the twittering of a sparrow wakes him. But the word is "rise" not "wake." Others therefore say that he sleeps so badly that he arises at cock-crow. But he must be a very hale and hearty old man to get up so early. Besides, one does not expect the sudden change to a direct reference to the person. It is therefore probable that the text is corrupt.

the daughters of music shall be brought low; yea, they 5

(2) One emendation for *shall rise up at* (*wyâqūm l*) is "the voice of the bird grows thin" (*wqāmal* or *yiqmul*, a rare verb, found in Hebrew only in Isa. xix. 6, xxxiii. 9, of flags and Lebanon "withering," and, in the Syriac Hexaplar, of grain shrivelling and bones wasting).

(3) Pod. prefers "is silent" (*wyiddôm*), in favour of which is the fact that Symm. renders the root (Job xxx. 27), or a very similar root (Jer. xiv. 17; Lam. iii. 49), by the same verb παύομαι that he has here, καὶ παύσεται φωνὴ τοῦ στρουθίου. Of the two suggestions the former requires less alteration of the Heb., and is the more probable. The clause will then mean that to the old and deaf man the bird's singing will seem weaker and weaker. If one asks, What bird? The answer is Either birds in general (Ps. civ. 12; Cant. ii. 12, if the R.V. text is right), or the cage-bird that was sometimes kept in Bible times (so perhaps Job xli 5 = xl. 29, Heb.; Bar. iii. 17), and by Jews of later days (see a saying attributed to R. Levi of the third century A.D. in the *Pestaiq d'Rab Kahana*, ed. Buber, xxv. p. 164*a*). Although domestic fowls were known in Palestine from about the third century B.C. there is no reason to suppose that *the bird* here is the cock.

and all] Why *all*? (1) No one singer (if singers are intended) is so superior as to prove an exception. (2) It may have in part a retrogressive effect—not only the songs of birds but all other notes.

the daughters of music] If this were a book written originally in Eng. there would be little doubt that women singers were intended. And this may have been the case. The thought would then be that although in past years the master of the house has derived much pleasure from the singing of the minstrels, either belonging to his household (as is more probable), or else hired at festivals, yet now that he is deaf they have no power to charm him.

But the Heb. uses the terms "son" and "daughter" much more widely, not only of persons, but of things. So Isa. v. 1, "very fruitful" is literally "son of oil"; Jonah iv. 10, "which came up in a night, and perished in a night," is literally "which (as) a son of a night was, and (as) a son of a night perished"; Job v. 7, "the sparks" are literally "the sons of flame." So here the meaning is probably individual notes. They all alike, however tuneful and high, fail to please. In any case Barzillai's words may be compared, 2 Sam. xix. 35.

It is very improbable that the author meant that the man was too old to sing himself (Targ.).

shall be brought low] This passive or reflexive (Niphal) form of the Heb. verb occurs also in Isa. ii. 9 (= v. 15) of man, and xxix. 4 of speech. The tones are considered in their effect. Old people often complain that others speak so low.

The curious rendering of the Vulg., *et obsurdescent omnes filiae carminis*, refers by hypallage to the old man. Jer. says of it:

aures significat, quod gravior senum auditus fiat, et nulla inter voces valeant scire discrimina, nec carminibus delectari.

With the picture of old age thus far we may compare that, almost cynical in its unsparing minuteness, of Juvenal, *Sat.* x. 200—239. A few of the more striking parallels may be selected as examples:

Frangendus misero gingiva panis inermi.

"Bread must be broken for the toothless gums."

Non eadem vini, atque cibi, torpente palato,
Gaudia.

"For the dulled palate wine and food have lost
Their former savours."

Adspice partis
Nunc damnum alterius; nam quae cantante voluptas,
Sit licet eximius, citharoedo sitve Seleucus,
Et quibus aurata mos est fulgere lacerna?
Quid refert, magni sedeat qua parte theatri,
Qui vix cornicines exaudiet atque tubarum
Concentus?

"Now mark the loss of yet another sense:
What pleasure now is his at voice of song.
How choice soe'er the minstrel, artist famed,
Or those who love to walk in golden robes?
What matters where he sits in all the space
Of the wide theatre, who scarce can hear
The crash of horns and trumpets?"

Or again

Ille humero, hic lumbis, hic coxa debilis; ambos
Perdidit ille oculos, et luscis invidet; huius
Pallida labra cibum accipiunt digitis alienis,
Ipse ad conspectum coenae diducere rictum
Suetus hiat tantùm, ceu pullus hirundinis, ad quem
Ore volat pleno mater ieiuna.

"Shoulders, loins, hip, each failing in its strength
Now this man finds, now that, and one shall lose
Both eyes, and envy those that boast but one....
And he who used, at sight of supper spread,
To grin with wide-oped jaw, now feebly gapes,
Like a young swallow, whom its mother bird
Feeds from her mouth filled, though she fast herself."

5. Qoh. here turns to portray the old man, first, as regards his exercise out of doors; he fears to go up, and he fears to go out; secondly, in his external appearance, his lack of alertness, and lastly his disinclination even to eat. For he is dying.

yea] Literally, "also." Five additional details are now to be described.

shall be afraid [1]of *that which is* high, and terrors *shall be* in the way; and the almond tree shall blossom, and the

[1] Or, of danger *from on high*

they shall be afraid] The plural refers to old people in general. It seems quite unnecessary to emend the verb to the sing., although the last letter (which marks the plur.) is the same as that which begins the next word. The LXX and Symm. read "they shall see," which implies that the Heb. was written in as short a form as possible, but the Eng. version is better.

of that which is *high*] Either hills, of which there are many more in Palestine than in England, or stairs, as for example the outside stairs ascending to the roof (Matt. xxiv. 17). "They say to him, 'Dost thou desire to go and visit this sick man?' He says to them, 'Is there a ladder I must go up? Is it high up?'" (Midr. *Tanchuma*, on Gen. xxv. 1, § 7, Buber's edition.) The R.V. margin "*of danger* from on high" is due to a misunderstanding of the Heb. idiom, by which "from" can follow "fear," as indicating the cause.

and terrors shall be *in the way*] The street (if Qoh. intended this) of an Eastern town is infinitely more dangerous than that of a Western town to-day, motors and all, for besides the general neglect into which it falls it has neither side paths nor regulators of the traffic. And in the East *noblesse oblige* does not hold good. Everyone must make way for a man of rank. Hence for an old and weak man there are countless terrors in a street. And even if Qoh. had a country road in mind his statement is true. For the so-called roads or tracks are wild and rough, and very lonely. An old man would shrink from them.

and the almond tree shall blossom] This is the first of three very perplexing clauses, which have been the subject of endless discussion. If the interpretation adopted is right it will be seen that the stress in each case lies more on the verb than on the substantive, the action rather than that of which the action is affirmed. For the thing is not mentioned for itself, but what it does is taken as representing a fresh detail in the man's decrepitude.

and...shall blossom] The Heb. word is a denominative (of slightly irregular form) from the word translated "its blossoms" in Gen. xl. 10. It occurs also in Cant. vi. 11, vii. 12. It calls attention to the fact that the almond is remarkable for blossoming in mid-winter. There are, it must be remembered, two kinds of almond tree in Palestine, one, more commonly seen in England, producing pink blossoms and only bitter almonds; and the other, which alone is cultivated and grown in orchards, bearing flowers almost entirely white, save for a slightly pink centre, and the ordinary almonds of commerce. Qoh. clearly refers to the latter. Thomson in *The Land and the Book*, 1887, p. 319, says, "The

grasshopper [1] shall be a burden, and [2] the caper-berry shall

[1] Or, *shall drag itself along* [2] Or, *desire*

white blossoms completely cover the whole tree." And Post in more detail says,

About midwinter the bare tree is suddenly covered with blossoms, an inch to an inch and a half broad. Although the petals are pale pink toward their base, they are usually whitish toward their tips, and the general effect of an almond tree in blossom is white. As there are no leaves on the tree when the blossoms come out, the whole tree appears a mass of white, and the effect of a large number of them, interspersed among the dark-green foliage and golden fruit of the lemon and orange, and the feathery tops of the palms, is to give an indescribable charm to the January and February landscapes in the orchards of the large cities of Palestine and Syria. Soon after blossoming, the delicate petals begin to fall in soft, snowy showers on the ground under and around the trees.... Gesenius objects that the blossom of the almond is pink, not white.... But this objection has no force. The pink colour of the almond blossom is very light, usually mainly at the base of the petals, and fades as they open, and the general effect of the tree as seen at a distance is snowy-white. (H.D.B. I. 67.)

The natural meaning of the clause is therefore that the signs of life's midwinter are seen in the white hair of the old man. For the early blossoming of the almond, cf. *Ahikar*, II. 7, Syriac, "My son, be not in a hurry, like the almond-tree whose blossom is the first to appear, but whose fruit is the last to be eaten."

Plu.'s interpretation (Introd. p. 50) is less probable, "Sleep was more and more a stranger to his eyes, and his nights were passed, as it were, under the branches of the almond tree, the 'early waking tree' that was the symbol of *insomnia* (Jer. i. 11, 12)." Cf. Ps. cxxvii. 1, "The watchman *waketh*," and in Ecclus. xxxi. 1, it is apparently used of the wakefulness of a rich man.

One other interpretation is worth recording. The verb is given different vowels (*ynō'atz* for *yān'ēlz*), and the clause is translated, "The almond (the nut, not the tree) is rejected," i.e. the old man is no longer able to eat it (Pod., and, with some variations, C. Taylor, McN.).

and the grasshopper shall be a burden] (1) The verb as such is not uncommon in the sense of carrying as a burden. But the reflexive form of it occurs here only, and it is a question whether it can mean "shall be a burden" to another.

(2) On the whole the R.V. margin is more probable, "shall drag itself along," as a burden. The image seems therefore to be that of a locust crawling along with some difficulty—*either* because it is still in its *larva* or in its *pupa* state, before it has finally moulted and become a perfect locust (see Dr. on Joel, pp. 86 *sq.*), *or* because the morning is still cold and wet (Nah. iii. 17). It

cannot fly, though it would like to do so, it can only drag itself along. So is it with the old man. He has lost all his alertness of body and of mind.

The reading mentioned in Driver-Kittel (*wyiṣtakkēl* instead of *wyiṣtabbel*), and occurring here only, may mean "acts foolishly," or, as in the Talmud, "becomes confused." For the root see ii. 19, "a fool."

(3) An interpretation which strains the meaning of the verb, and is in itself much less probable, is, "The locust becomes too heavy" for the old man to eat. "The light, easily digested locust is food too solid for the old man" (McN.). But although Tristram (*Natural History of the Bible*, p. 318) describes locusts as "very good when eaten after the Arab fashion, stewed with butter," adding, "they tasted somewhat like shrimps, but with less flavour," Wetzstein is very emphatic on their being eaten only by the poor, when food is very scarce. He says, "It is quite impossible (*durchaus unmöglich*) that Qoh. intended to say that the old man was obliged to deny himself the great pleasure of a meal of locusts from the weakness of his stomach."

(4) Plu. most strangely supposes that it means that the old man cannot bear the weight of a locust of gold worn as an ornament, after the manner of the Athenians!

(5) C. Taylor, almost as strangely, thought it meant that the pleasant song (?) of the τέττιξ, the *cicada*, was burdensome!

and the caper-berry shall fail] There is no doubt that "the caper-berry" is right, "the desire" of the A.V. being probably only a guess derived from its apparent etymology. A picture and description of *Capparis spinosa*, Linn., may be found in Tristram, *Natural History of the Bible*, pp. 456 *sqq.*:

> The Caper is always pendent on the rocks or trailing on the ground. The stem has short recurved spines below the junction of each leaf. The leaves are oval, of a glossy green, and in the warmer situations are evergreen. The blossom is very open, loose, and white, with many long lilac anthers. The fruit is a large pod, about the size and shape of a walnut. It is the bud of the flower that is pickled and exported as a sauce.

See also Post in H.D.B. i. 350.

It is too often assumed that the reference is to the caper-berry as an aphrodisiac, but although, as Post says, "like all pungent plants, it is stimulating to the erotic instinct," there is no evidence that this quality was especially attributed to it before medieval times. Pliny, for example, in his *Natural History*, when enumerating its many qualities says nothing of this; nor does he include it in his lists of aphrodisiacs. Hence we are not justified in seeing here a reference to more than its power of stimulating the desire for food. Qoh. means that to an old person at last even an appetiser fails. He cannot eat, use what means one may to give him an appetite. To illustrate the attractiveness of the caper

[1]fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the

[1] Or, *burst*

Plu. says, "One of the Epicures in Athenaeus (*Deipnos*, IX. p. 370) takes Νὴ τὸν κάπταριν (By the caper!) as a favourite oath, just as a modern *gourmet* might swear by some favourite sauce."

While however the above translation is probably correct the verb presents a difficulty, for this form of it (*tāphêr*) is not intransitive elsewhere. Emendations have therefore been proposed:

(1) A passive form (*tûphar*) which may be (*a*) "is made inefficacious" with essentially the same meaning as above, or (*b*) "is broken up," according to which the reference is to the fruit shrivelling and so breaking (see Post's letter in the *Oxford Heb. Lex.* p. 830), the reference then being to the old man at last breaking up and dying. The R.V. margin "burst" is probably due to the mistaken opinion that the fruit is properly dehiscent, like, for example, that of the *Noli-me-tangere*.

(2) A slight alteration in the consonants gives (*a*) *tiphrach*, "the caperberry burgeons," or (*b*) *tiphreh*, "the caperberry is fruitful," the meaning being that its white flowers suggest the white hair of old people. But this would require another meaning to be given to "the almond tree shall blossom," and is not in itself so probable as the interpretation adopted.

because man] Better "the man" under consideration, but the term of widest signification is employed, to include any human being.

goeth to his long home] *Goeth* is misleading; better, "is going." Literally, "his everlasting home," a common phrase for the grave, found in the Bible (Ps. xlix. 11, R.V. margin), in the Apocrypha (Tob. iii. 6); in the Targ. of Isa. xiv. 18, xlii. 11; in the Talmud (T.B. *Sanhedrin*, 19 *a*). So Diodorus Siculus (I. 51) says the Egyptians called the homes of the living *caravanserais* (καταλύσεις) but the tombs of the dead ἀϊδίους οἴκους, and the Romans speak of the grave as *domus aeterna*. The Phoenicians, Palmyrenes, and the Edessa Christians seem to have done so also (see Wright on this passage).

and the mourners] iii. 4, note. Professional, chiefly women (Jer. ix. 17—20), but perhaps also men (Am. v. 16; Matt. ix. 23). So Josephus speaking of the grief at Jerusalem over the fall of Jotapata, and in particular over the fictitious rumour of his own death, "but all mourned for Josephus, insomuch that the lamentation did not cease in the city before the thirtieth day, and a great many persons hired mourners who acted as leaders for them in the dirges" (*B. J.* III. 9. 5, §§ 436 *sq.*). The Mishna says, "On the days of the New Moon, at Chanuka (Dedication), and at Purim [the mourning women] lament in chorus and beat their hands together, but do not sing a dirge. When the corpse is interred they do not lament in chorus and do not beat their

mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be 6

hands. What is meant by lamentation in chorus? When all lament together. It is a dirge (*qînah*) when one of them speaks and they all respond after her" (*Mo'ed Qaton*, III. 9).

go about (i. 6, note, "turneth about") *the streets*] Or rather, "the street," in which the dying man is. They want to be hired, and take care to be near the house when the death actually takes place.

6, 7. The third stage of this poem. Qoh. speaks no longer of old age, but of death itself.

6. He describes death under four figures of increasing intensity, a snapped cord, a broken metal bowl, a pitcher broken to pieces at a spring, the whole machinery of a draw-well falling with a crash.

The two general questions of the precise character and interrelation of the figures, and of their specific and individual meaning —if they have any—can be best discussed after the words themselves have been considered.

or ever] Introducing a new stage (*v.* 1, note).

the silver cord] The *cord* (*chebel*) is no mere string, such as might be implied in iv. 12 (*chût*). It is used always of a large cord, of which the line used by David to "measure" the Moabites for death (2 Sam. viii. 2) may be considered the smallest kind. It cannot well be less than half or three-quarters of an inch thick and may be very much more.

Silver suggests greater strength, beauty, and value. "The high value of life is symbolised by the precious metals, silver and gold" (Wild.). Probably however the cord is also supposed to be holding up something of value, perhaps the "bowl" of the next clause. It is not likely that the author has a draw-well in mind (see below).

be loosed] The Heb. consonants of the verb (*R.CH.Q.*) properly mean "be afar," and there is no evidence that it can ever mean "slip" or "get loose" from the stay or wheel, which would give good sense. But the Heb. vowels belong to another word (*R.TH.Q.*)[1] which elsewhere (Nah. iii. 10 †, cf. Isa. xl. 19) means "be bound," and those scholars who give this a privative meaning here, i.e. "be loosed" can hardly be right. It can only mean that the cord is "tied" or "caught up" in some way that prevents its functions being fulfilled. If it did refer to the cord of a water-wheel (see below) this would give sense.

But the emendation of the R.V. margin, "be snapped asunder" (*yinnathēq*) is almost certainly right (see iv. 12) and is presupposed by Symm., Vulg., Pesh., and possibly even by the original text of the LXX. It is adopted by nearly all modern scholars.

or . . . or . . . or] The conjunction is the common "and" in each case, and *or* is slightly misleading, for it excludes the possibility

[1] The consonants are the *written* text (the *Kthîb*), and the vowels are the vocalisation of other consonants which are *read* (the *Qrî*).

[1]loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be

[1] Or, *snapped asunder*

of the event in one clause being the effect of the event in the preceding.

the golden bowl] The same word for *bowl* occurs in Zech. iv. 3, and perhaps in the original text of the preceding verse, in connexion with the golden lampstand, and "the golden *oil*" (Zech. iv. 12). It has therefore been supposed that a lamp is here spoken of, either with a "bowl" made of gold (silver lamps are mentioned in Judith x. 22), or containing oil which for its colour or perhaps its special value is described as *golden*. Either would give good sense here (see the next note), and it has been fairly urged that for the Hebrews a lamp was symbolical of life (1 K. xi. 36; Prov. xiii. 9) and prosperity (Job xxix. 3). So the "perpetual lamp" never went out in the Tabernacle (Lev. xxiv. 2) and in the Temple, as Josephus says, quoting from Hecataeus, "a large edifice, wherein there is an altar and a candlestick both of gold, and in weight two talents: upon these there is a light that is never extinguished, either by night or by day" (*c. Apion*, I. 22, §§ 198 *sq.*). It seems also to have been the custom in ancient times, as also to-day in Palestine, to keep a lamp continually alight. Cf. *v.* 4 (note "and the doors.")

The word is used also of the bowl-like capitals of pillars (1 K. vii. 41 *sq.* =2 Chr. iv. 12 *sq.*).

be broken] The *prima facie* translation of the Heb. word is "shall rush," and if the word were ever used of falling down with a rush this would give sense. But it is never so used, and it can hardly mean that the golden oil will rush out. It is therefore better to alter the vocalisation, by which we obtain "be broken," or rather "be crushed." This need not mean "crushed to fragments," for the word is used of a reed being "crushed in" (Isa. xlii. 3), and may well be used of the injury received by a thin metal bowl, or sphere, if it falls. It might be quite irremediable by the ordinary householder.

Is however a lamp intended? Probably, in view of the excellence of its symbolism (*vide supra*). The fact that it was hanging, and not (as more commonly) placed upon a stand, creates no difficulty in view of Josephus' statement that in the Jewish Temple built by Onias IV at Leontopolis in Egypt, *c.* 154 B.C., instead of the golden candlestick was "a (single) lamp hammered out of a piece of gold...which he hung by a chain of gold" (*B. J.* VII. 10. 3, § 429).

or the pitcher] Such as is still carried by women to fetch water (Gen. xxiv. 14; John iv. 28).

be broken] A different word from the earlier. It means broken in pieces, as a flask (Jer. xix. 10), and pottery in general (Lev. vi. 28, xv. 12), or even "the bronze sea" of the Temple by the Chaldaean spoilers (Jer. lii. 17).

broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern;

at the fountain] The Heb. substantive occurs only here and Isa. xxxv. 7, xlix. 10 in both cases "springs of water." It properly means a place where the water gushes forth freely, and suggests that it would be necessary only to dip the pitcher in by hand.

or the wheel] Dr C. Taylor, followed hesitatingly by McN., proposes "bucket," but there is no trace of such a meaning in either Biblical or post-Biblical Heb. The word (*galgal*) is that which rolls or whirls. The analogy of its formation to *gulgōleth*, a skull, is therefore misleading. Here it can only mean a wheel of some kind, by which, as often both in the East and in our own land, water is drawn up from a well.

broken] This is another form of the same Hebrew word represented by the first of the three words "broken" in this verse. It is in the perfect tense, connoting a more sudden, and also more complete, ruin than the imperfect which was used before.

at the cistern] This is different from *the fountain* of the preceding clause in that it connotes water underground below the level of the surface, but it is not certain whether it is a wholly artificial cistern into which the water was collected (Deut. vi. 11), or a well usually so called (1 Chr. xi. 17 *sq.*). The usage of the word is strongly in favour of the former, but it is a little strange that such a cistern should require the elaborate apparatus of a wheel. A hand bucket would seem sufficient.

For *at* some scholars would translate *into*, the thought being that the wheel crashes down into the cistern. But there are many parallels for the translation *at* (Josh. xi. 5).

We now come to the two questions that were postponed.

I. How many figures has the author in mind?

(*a*) Four are mentioned, and on the whole it seems best to keep them each separate, as has been implied in the notes.

(*b*) Some scholars say three, for the first two must be combined. It is a lamp that is hanging on the silver cord, and when the latter is snapped asunder the former falls and is ruined.

(*c*) Others, and most, say two figures only. For, ignoring the difference of the *spring* and the *cistern*, it is said that the pitcher is part of the wheel. Pod. sums up this view by saying, "La maison sans lampe et sans roue à la citerne est une maison abandonnée."

(*d*) Levy is sure that there is but one, and as his words throw a good deal of light on the verses it is worth translating them:

v. 6 describes a draw-well (*Ziehbrunnen*). The picture of the house is continued, the well or the cistern belongs to every house (cf. Benzinger, *Archäol.* pp. 71, 101). The draw-well, which one still finds today in villages, is a pit-well (*Schachtbrunnen*), out of which the water is drawn up by a system of pulleys (*Flaschenzug*). Over the opening of the well a wheel is fixed, often a wooden cylinder also, over which runs a chain.

7 and the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit

A bucket hangs either on each end of the chain, or only on one end, when there is a corresponding weight at the other. This last is what we have in this picture of Qoheleth. The *cord* runs over a *wheel* and carries at one end a bucket [=our *pitcher*], at the other end a corresponding weight, a ball of metal [=our *bowl*]. If one wants to draw water one pulls the *bowl* down, then the *pitcher* already filled rises up. If then the *cord* or the chain breaks and the *wheel* is rotten, naturally *pitcher* and *bowl* fall both at once into the well and the *wheel* falls in after them, and the machine is demolished—a fitting picture of destruction by death.

II. The second question is often asked, Whether each simile has a specific reference in addition to the general reference to death. This seems probable in view of the habit of Eastern poets to mean much more than appears on the surface of their words. But the divergence of opinions as to what actually is intended by each figure causes doubts of the reality of the references in this verse. Thus *the silver cord* has been thought to stand for the thread of life, the spinal marrow, the tongue; *the golden bowl* (or bowl of golden oil) for the soul in the body, the brain, the head; *the pitcher* for the heart, or for the gall broken with the liver; *the wheel* for the body, the stomach, the eye-ball, the respiratory organs, the motive power of the circulation. This is far from an exhaustive list, but sufficient to show that if the author did intend his figures to have individual applications he has been only too successful in concealing them. It is better to be content to find in them only an intensive series of illustrations of the death that must come to us all.

7. The result of death—dissolution of the two elements of the living man, dust to the earth, and the spirit to God.

On its relation to iii. 19—21 and to the whole question of Qoh.'s doctrine of life beyond the grave see the Introduction, pp. xliii—xlv.

and the dust return] The connexion with *or ever* (*v.* 6) is continued, and this may account for the unusual vocalisation of the Hebrew verb (*yāshōb* instead of *yāshūb*). Another explanation is that *ō* lends itself more readily than *ū* to a prolonged utterance, and may indicate that the verse was part of the mourners' dirge.

to the earth] Qoh. refers to Gen. ii. 7, iii. 19. The word translated *to* (*'al*) generally means *on*, and some commentators insist upon the latter meaning. But in very late Heb., like our author's, the preposition is treated as an equivalent to "to" (*'el*); see the Heb. of 2 Chron. xxx. 9 where "turn again," "return," are used with both prepositions.

as it was] To precisely its former state. The body becomes once more a component part of earth.

and the spirit] The parallelism of the clauses (Isa. xlii. 5; Job xxxiii. 4) suggests that "spirit" is there synonymous with "breath." If so Qoh. may well have used "the spirit" here to designate the "breath" of Gen. ii. 7. It will then mean the living

return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, saith 8
the Preacher; all is vanity.

And further, because the Preacher was wise, he still 9

principle. This is withdrawn and returns unto God who gave it. There is nothing in the phrase itself to determine whether that living principle is, or is not, identical with conscious personality, so that at death the individual is absorbed into the Divine being. But such an absorption would seem to be wholly contrary to the teaching of the Bible in general and of Ecclesiastes in particular.

8. The verse differs from i. 2 (see notes there) in two particulars only: (1) the insertion of the article before the Heb. word for Preacher (*Qoheleth*), see vii. 27, note; (2) the omission of the second "vanity of vanities." Although this is added in Pesh., and considered genuine by Zap., it is probable that it is only due to the remembrance of i. 2.

Ginsburg thinks that the verse introduces *vv.* 9 *sqq.*, urging especially that the formula about vanity (18 passages) always does introduce, not conclude, and that *v.* 9 begins with a copula. This last is however unimportant, see there. It is better to see in the verse Qoh.'s conclusion to the book proper, however we regard the following verses. Thomas à Kempis makes this verse and i. 2 thoroughly Christian by writing, "Vanitas vanitatum, et omnia vanitas, *praeter amare Deum, et ei soli servire*" (*Imitatio*, I. 1, 3).

9, 10. An Encomium of Qoh. and his Efforts.

(*a*) He was wise, (*b*) he not only wrote but continued to teach, (*c*) he examined and arranged many proverbs (*v.* 9). He also tried to clothe them in the most attractive style, placing truth first (*v.* 10).

9. A disciple, as it seems, adds the interesting statement that his master's work did not cease when he had finished his book. He also wrote many proverbs.

And] This does not imply that the sentence was originally joined to the preceding, but only that the Editor, having finished copying his manuscript, adds to it the following notice.

further] Or "besides." So in *v.* 12. The same Heb. word was a substantive in vii. 11 (something in excess, a profit) and an adverb in ii. 15 ("more," note). It connotes that Qoh. did more than has already been stated.

because the Preacher] In *v.* 8 the word *Qoheleth* has the article, but not here. Probably the reason is merely euphonic, for the article would in this verse follow a syllable of similar sound. Had the reason been that while *v.* 8 was the author's own description of himself, in our verse Qoheleth had become his name, we should have had the article also in i. 2, which is also by the Editor.

was wise] In view of the theory of additions by a *chākām*, a student of proverbial literature, it is important to notice that

taught the people knowledge; yea, he [1]pondered, and
10 sought out, *and* set in order many proverbs. The Preacher

[1] Or, *gave ear*

the disciple here expressly gives this term to his master. See **Introd. pp. xxv, xlviii.**

he still taught] The simplest meaning is the best. He was not satisfied with having written Eccles., but continued his literary activity, which took a slightly different direction. Another explanation is that he gained wisdom not for himself only but to benefit others. Cf. Ecclus. xxxvii. 23, where there is a contrast between him who is wise for his people and him who is wise only for himself.

the people knowledge] The order of the Heb. is unusual (contrast Deut. iv. 5, 14; Isa. xl. 14) and probably emphasises *knowledge*.

the people] Eccles. itself can hardly have been intended for a popular book. The Editor is thinking, as soon appears, of collections of proverbial sayings. For *people* the LXX reads "man," which can hardly be original. But McN. remarks, If it is the true reading "the editor praises the writer as though he were Solomon, ascribing world-wide effects to his teaching," which is rather fanciful.

yea] Much too strong a rendering for the simple copula here.

he pondered] Or "weighed." This is now the usual, and probably the right, translation, of *'izzēn*, a root found elsewhere in Heb. only in *mō'znaim*, "scales," and perhaps in a place-name (1 Chr. vii. 24). But it is said to exist in Arabic. All the ancient versions however, connect it with *'ōzen*, "ear," and give the meaning of "gave ear" (R.V. margin), "paid attention." Levy explains that Qoh. listened to the proverbs in the mouth of the populace.

and sought out] Rather, "investigated." He learned all that he could about them, their meaning and application. It does not mean that he inquired for new sayings, as the English suggests.

and *set in order*] The *and* has been added for the sake of the Eng. idiom. Its absence in Heb. gives emphasis. In fact he set in order. *Set in order* is a translation of the Heb. word found in vii. 13 ("make straight"), and (in the simple voice) i. 15 ("be made straight"). It occurs also in a mutilated passage, Ecclus. xlvii. 9, perhaps of arranging songs. Here the meaning is, he gave the best form he could devise to the proverbs he collected.

many proverbs] The word *proverb* has a much wider meaning in Heb. than with us, ranging from concise summaries of experience (our "proverbs") to parables and allegories of all kinds (cf. Ezek. xviii. 2 with xx. 49 "parables" and Ps. lxxviii. 2). It is impossible to say which meaning was uppermost in the Editor's mind, but most commentators think it was the narrower. Some suppose that the reference is to the canonical Book of Proverbs, and it has even been thought that the editor means Solomon,

sought to find out [1]acceptable words, and that which was written uprightly, *even* words of truth.

The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails well 11

[1] Heb. *words of delight.*

who, besides writing Ecclesiastes composed that book. But though there are some proverbial sayings in Eccles. as it has come down to us, the greater part of its language is very different. It would be strange indeed if Qoh. was responsible for two books which differ so greatly in style.

10. The disciple tells us more of the spirit and method of his master's work. Qoh. endeavoured to give the most attractive form, but in uprightness of heart wrote only what was true.

The Preacher sought] Both desire and effort are implied.

to find out acceptable words] "Heb. *words of delight*," i.e. words in which men take pleasure (*v.* 1). Compare Isa. liv. 12, "pleasant stones"; Ezek. xxvii. 20, "precious cloths" (R.V.). Aq. (λόγους χρείας), Symm. and Vulg. (*verba utilia*) strangely adopt the other meaning of the Heb. word (iii. 1, 17, viii. 6), i.e. as though the phrase was literally "words of business."

and that which was written uprightly] This is the right translation of the Masoretic vocalisation of the words. But it is very harsh. It is better, while retaining the consonants, to alter the vowels, reading the infinitive absolute (*wkāthōb* for *wkāthúb*), and rendering, "and wrote." This may then follow either *to find*, or, better, *sought*, as in viii. 9, ix. 11. Thus the Preacher sought to find, and did write.

uprightly] For there was nothing underhand, or, as we should say, unconscientious in his writing. Cf. Job vi. 25 ("words of uprightness").

even *words of truth*] As *uprightly* referred to the writer so this to the objective character of what was written. He would not sacrifice to beauty of form the least detail of truth.

11. A very obscure verse, the general drift of which appears to be that the words of the wise urge us forward, are wholly trustworthy, provide sustenance, and have their final source in God. But in the middle part of the verse the imagery is set forth in terms of which the meaning is very uncertain. It will be noticed however that both the first and the last clauses refer to agriculture, and that we may therefore expect the intervening clauses to refer to it also.

The words of the wise] Such *words* as those of *v.* 10 spoken by the *wise* man of *v.* 9. Here however the statement is general, *wise* being in the plur. It comes very near to its later meaning of "professed scholars," but the absence of the article in the original, shows that scholars are not yet regarded as a class apart. The Mishna, no doubt (e.g. *Berakoth*, 1. 1) speaks of the traditional

fastened are *the words of* the [1]masters of assemblies, *which*

[1] Or, *collectors of sentences*

explanation of a passage by the phrase "[The] wise say," but this was at least four or five hundred years later than our author.

are as goads] The Heb. word occurs only here and (in the sing.) in 1 Sam. xiii. 21. In both places it seems to be the long stick carried by every ploughman with a sharp iron point at one end to goad the oxen, and a flat piece of iron at the other to clean the ploughshare. Presumably the latter would be absent if the instrument were required only to drive the cattle from place to place as a herdman would do.

Saalschutz (*Archäologie*, 1855, I. p. 106) thinks the Hebrews could never use so cruel an instrument, and makes it mean the point of the ploughshare, but the practice is confirmed by Ecclus. xxxviii. 25 (where the Hebrew word is the same as in Judg. iii. 31) and Acts xxvi. 14. For the comparison of words to goads Plu. recalls "what was said of the words of Pericles that his eloquence 'left a sting' (κέντρον) in the minds of his hearers (Eupolis, quoted by Lidd. and Scott, *s.v.* κέντρον)." Further, the proverb to "kick against the pricks" is used by Æschylus (*Agam.* 1624, *Prom. Vinct.* 323), Euripides (*Bacchae*, 795), and Pindar (*Pyth.* II. 173), of resisting wisdom.

It is best to take the next clause almost word for word before trying to understand it as a whole.

and as nails] The word has distinctly this sense in Isa. xli. 7, Jer. x. 4 (material undefined); 1 Chr. xxii. 3 (expressly of iron), and apparently in 2 Chr. iii. 9 †, where however the "nails" are of gold. But we must not limit such nails to the sizes we usually employ. In old timber work of our own houses they are a foot long, and the word may well have included any peg of metal. So *Leviticus R.* on Lev. iv. 3 (referring to Isa. xxii. 23) uses "peg" (*vāthêd*) and "nail" (our word *maṣmār*) as synonyms, and in the Mishna, the Tosephta, and the Jerusalem Talmud it is used very widely, e.g. of the weaver's pin and the style of the sun-dial (see Jastrow). It may therefore have meant a large nail in a wall on which things could be hung, or even a picket for tethering animals.

well fastened] In Heb. the one word "planted," as in ii. 4. It is used figuratively of the people of Israel in Palestine (Jer. xlii. 10, Ezek. xxxvi. 36); of the ear (Ps. xciv. 9); of the heavens (Isa. li. 16); of the tents of a palace (Dan. xi. 45). "Planting" suggests both more security of setting, and more visibility, when set, than "sowing."

are the words of *the masters of assemblies*] It should be noticed that the words "*are* the words of" do not actually appear in the Heb. They are part of the R.V. interpretation.

What is the meaning of the Heb. for *the masters of assemblies*

(*ba'alêy 'aṣuppôth*)? The first of the two words is evidently the plur. of the common word *ba'al*, "master," "owner," "possessor" (v. 11 (10), 13 (12), vii. 12, viii. 8, x. 11, 20). It is occasionally used of inanimate objects (Isa. xli. 15). The second word (*'aṣuppôth*) is unique with the form of a fem. plur., but occurs with that of a masc. plur. in Neh. xii. 25, 1 Chr. xxvi. 15, 17, in all three cases referring to storehouses in the Temple area. In itself the word presumably means things that are collected or gathered up (especially if the reading of some MSS. *'aṣûphôth* be right). It may refer to fruits that are harvested (as perhaps in the Biblical passages above)—compare Mishna, *Sanhed.* III. 3 (6) in Jastrow, *Dict.* p. 95, "those who harvest the fruits of the Sabbath year (for storage)"; or to animals collected in a drove or mob, or to sayings collected in books, or even to people, "assemblies." T. J. *Sanhedrin*, x. 1, end (p. 28 *a*, bottom) gives the last as its homiletical explanation of the passage, identifying the noun with the kindred word, *'aṣîphah*.

It is evident that the four Heb. words of this middle sentence present wide scope for the ingenuity of translators.

I. "The masters of assemblies" (R.V. text) or "The collectors of sentences" (R.V. margin) are treated as the subject of the clause, the objection being that the sudden interpolation of a direct reference to "the heads or leaders of a body of learned men, like the Great Synagogue of the traditions of the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, or the Sanhedrin of a later date" (Plumptre) is very improbable.

A variation coming under this category is Wright's rendering, "and like nails firmly-driven-in are the masters of (i.e. persons well versed in) collections (of such sayings)," but it is open to the same objection.

Another is "and as nails well fastened are those that are composed in collections" (Jewish American Version).

II. The insertion of a preposition "by" before the word translated "masters." This requires only the reduplication of the "m" at the end of the Heb. word for *well fastened* and is in itself not improbable. The words may then give (*a*) "as nails fastened *by* the masters of assemblies" (A.V.), when we have again the strange reference to assemblies, or (*b*) the possible rendering, "as pickets well set (in the ground) by the owners of the droves." But the objections are that there seems to be no direct evidence of such a use of the Heb. word for "pickets," and that, in any case, pickets would hardly be used in the case of so many animals as "drove" implies[1].

III. The words translated "the masters of assemblies" are rendered "holders of stores," and are taken in apposition with

[1] The custom of picketing cattle in the village prevails among the Acholi in Central Africa (A. B. Lloyd, *Uganda to Khartoum*, 1907, pp. 179, 193 *sq.*), but it is a far cry from there to Palestine.

12 are given from one shepherd. [1]And furthermore, my son,

[1] Or, *And as for more than these, my son, be warned*

the preceding words, the whole being translated, "as nails well fastened, holders of stores." The meaning then is that the words of the wise are not only like goads urging on to fresh efforts, but are also like long nails firmly fixed in a wall on which are supported baskets containing fruit and vegetables of various kinds able to nourish and support. This is in part Pod.'s suggestion (though he includes more than foods), and though the figure is not quite as close to that of the oxen in the first, and perhaps in the third, clause of the verse, it at least keeps that of the agriculturist in general, and is on the whole to be preferred. Compare the use of a "peg" (*yāthêd*) mentioned in Isa. xxii. 23 *sq.*; Ezek. xv. 3. See also Ecclus. xxvii. 2. But it must be acknowledged that such a use of pegs or nails obtains to a very small extent in Palestine houses to-day. Stores in any great quantity have their own receptacles. Of course it is possible that these are mentioned by the editor as a third point of comparison, but if so we must suppose that two letters, meaning "and as," have been omitted by a copyist.

which *are given*] It is not quite clear what are given. We should have expected that the figure would have been strictly carried on, and the "shepherd" be said to give out the goads and the nails. The former we can understand but not the latter. Is it then the "stores" hanging on the nails? Hardly. Probably the author begins to leave his simile, and to refer to the words of the wise. But it is altogether unreasonable to refer it to the Book of Proverbs, as Pod. (p. 480) is inclined to do (see above on *v.* 9, last note).

from] For the construction compare the Hebrew of 2 Kings xxv. 30 ("given him of the king," R.V.).

one shepherd] If, as is probable, the words of the wise are said to come ultimately from him, there can be no doubt who He is. See Gen. xlix. 24; Ps. xxiii., and often. The author means that whatever the immediate effect of such words may be—whether as goads or as nourishment—they come ultimately from God Himself. It is quite needless to see any reference to intermediaries or under-shepherds such as teachers, prophets, Moses.

12. A personal warning against reading too many books and too much study.

And furthermore, my son, be admonished] The words quite literally are, "and further (*v.* 9) than (or, 'from') those, my son, be warned," but the exact meaning is doubtful.

(1) The R.V. text seems to understand "those" as referring to all that has hitherto been said; *furthermore* being regarded as a suitable paraphrase. But this hardly gives sufficient weight to "those."

be admonished: of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh.

(2) The A.V. "and further by these, my son, be admonished" gives an unusual meaning to the verb, and the preposition, and even (see below) to the demonstrative pronoun, unless "these" be taken to refer to what precedes.

(3) "And as for more than these, my son, be warned" (R.V. margin). For "more than these" see Esth. vi. 6; Ecclus. viii. 13 ("above thy power"). This is accepted by Pod. Similarly, Jer. says, "With the exception of those words which have been given by one Shepherd, and approved by the council and consent of the wise, do nothing, and claim nothing for thyself. Follow the footprints of the elders, and differ not from their authority, otherwise when thou art making many inquiries, thou wilt meet with an endless number of books, to lead thee into error, and will make thee in thy reading labour in vain." Some think that the warning is, Be contented with the canonical books supposed to be implied in *v.* 11, and avoid both heathen and uncanonical literature. But "the words of the wise" in *v.* 11 cannot mean canonical books in general, and the writer would hardly confine his reader to proverbs.

(4) McN. explains (p. 93), "'Besides (attending to) those (words of the wise), be warned,' and be not led away by the multitude of books," and perhaps this is the safest explanation.

(5) But it is very tempting to disregard the accents and taking the first word alone, as in *v.* 9, connect the preposition with the verb as in Ezek. iii. 18, xxxiii. 8 *sq.*, although "those" must then refer definitely to what follows. The translation will then be "And further against those (two things), my son, be warned," viz. many books and too much study. The sense is much the best, if so emphatic a use of "those" can be admitted.

my son] "The term commonly given to the disciple by the master in the book of Proverbs (i. 8, 10, 15, ii. 1, iii. 1, 11, 21, iv. 10, etc.)," as Pod. says. The Epilogist must have been a *Chākām* as well as Qoheleth (*v.* 9).

be admonished] iv. 13. It does not mean "be taught," but "be warned."

of making many books there is no end] Plu. says:

> The words...point to a time when the teachers of Israel had come in contact with the literature of other countries, which overwhelmed them with its variety and copiousness, and the scholar is warned against trusting to that literature as a guide to wisdom. Of that copiousness the Library at Alexandria with its countless volumes would be the great example, and the inscription over the portals of that at Thebes that it was the Hospital of the Soul (*ἰατρεῖον ψυχῆς*, Diodor. Sic. 1. 49) incited men to study them as the remedy for their spiritual diseases. Conspicuous among these, as the most voluminous of all, were the writings

13 [1]*This is* the end of the matter; all hath been heard:

[1] Or, *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter*

of Demetrius Phalereus (Diog. Laert. v. 5. 9), and those of Epicurus, numbering three hundred volumes (Diog. Laert. x. 1. 17), and of his disciple Apollodorus, numbering four hundred (Diog. Laert. x. 1. 15), and these and other like writings, likely to unsettle the faith of a young Israelite, were probably in the Teacher's thought.

He continues

The teaching of the Jewish Rabbis at the time when Koheleth was written was chiefly oral, embodying itself in maxims and traditions, and the scantiness of its records must have presented a striking contrast to the abounding fulness of the philosophy of Greece.

Plu. probably underestimates the literary activity of the Jews of the time, but there may be some truth in the contrast he describes.

and much study] The word (*lahag*) occurs here only, and in the Midrashim only with reference to this passage. Siegfried connects it with an Arabic root which, he says, means "to chatter," and he sees here a reference to Rabbinic discussions. But the Arabic is generally interpreted, "to be devoted" or "attached," and our word, "devotion to study," suits the context better. Perles (in Levy) made the interesting suggestion that the author wrote *lahᵃgoth*, "and to meditate much," the last letters having fallen out either by mere carelessness or by an abbreviation. There is some indirect support for this reading in T.J. *Sanhedrin*, x. 1 (28 *a*), and it certainly gives excellent sense.

is a weariness] The Heb. substantive occurs here only, but the adjective in i. 8, x. 15.

of the flesh] ii. 3. For the statement in general see i. 18. "The words of Marcus Aurelius, the representative of Stoicism, when he bids men to 'free themselves from the thirst for books' (*Medit.* II. 3) present a striking parallel" (Plu.). But the reason adduced is quite different.

13, 14. Final Words. Fear God; He is the Judge.

The son of Sirach applies *v.* 13 in a Midrashic manner, "And the sum of our words is, He is all" (Ecclus. xliii. 27).

13. The verse begins in Heb. with an unusually large letter, presumably to draw attention to the importance of its contents. There are no capital letters in Hebrew.

This is *the end of the matter*] The R.V. is certainly right, though rather more definite than the Heb., which has no article. The writer sums up the teaching of the book.

all hath been heard] The construction is the same as in ii. 16 (literally "all hath been forgotten"). It is better to take it as

fear God, and keep his commandments; for [1]this is the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into 14

[1] Or, *this is* the duty of *all men*

an independent sentence, stating that all which the Writer had to say has been said, than to translate, "when all hath been heard."

The R.V. margin, following the A.V., is, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter." This rendering of the verb is possible but the rest improbable. The Vulg. even associates "all" with the subject of the verb, *Finem loquendi omnes pariter audiumus*, which is quite contrary to the usage of *all* (*ha-kôl*) in this Book. Siegfried, following a mistaken interpretation of the LXX, would emend the verb to an imperative, "Hear."

Observe that part of the verse has a curious jingle, as if we said, "The end of the *word*; the whole is *heard*: Fear the *Lord*, and every *word* of His ob*serve*."

fear God, and keep his commandments] See, in particular, v. 7 (6) and vii. 18.

for this is the whole duty *of man*] The translators evidently thought that the literal translation was, "for this is the whole of man," and inserted *duty* for the sake of popular English. The margin "this is *the duty* of all men" is better, but insufficient, for in accordance with the usage of this Book (see iii. 13, note) we must translate, "For this (is) every man." The juxtaposition recalls Ps. cix. 4 ("I *am* prayer," cf. iii. 19, note), and implies that to fear God and keep His commandments is expected of, and can be accomplished in, every man. As Jer. says, "*Ad hoc enim natum esse hominem, ut creatorem suum intelligens, veneretur eum metu, et honore, et opere mandatorum.*"

14. The reason for fearing God: He will judge everything that is done, and that thoroughly. Evil shall not stand against Him.

Observe the strength of the reason, much more virile than the appeal of God's love as presented by too many Christian preachers, and, in any case, it is necessary as a preparation for the Gospel message based on God's love. Observe also that although the writer can hardly have expected his words to be read by others than Jews, he, in accordance with the spirit of the whole Book, makes no mention of any special privileges of Jews, but regards his readers solely as men.

For God shall bring every work into judgement] This hardly refers only to God's judgement as seen in His dealing with men in this life (cf. viii. 11—13; Ecclus. xvii. 13—24), though this interpretation is followed by Zap. and Pod. The writer doubtless means the judgement upon each man after death, as in iii. 17 (see note) and probably xi. 9. And so Del., Wright. But there is nothing to show whether the judgement is thought of as taking place at

judgement, [1]with every hidden thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

[1] Or, *concerning*

one Great Day, or at each man's death. The emphasis is on *every work* with a secondary emphasis on *God*.

On the relation of the verse to the thought of the whole Book see Introd. p. xlv.

with] The margin is preferable, "concerning." The phrase defines the nature and extent of the judgement. It is to be the judgement on *every hidden thing* (cf. 1 K. x. 3). For the thought see Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5. Compare also Jer. ii. 35.

whether it be good or whether it be evil] The accents rightly show that this refers not to *every hidden thing* but to *every work*. The Masoretes disliked to end a book with a word of such bad omen, and gave directions that *v.* 13 be repeated, apparently meaning when the book is read aloud, and so in Isaiah, the Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets, and Lamentations. But the writer of *v.* 14 had himself no such scruple. Rather he would lay stress on the fact that evil itself could not escape the all-searching power of the great God.

AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE HEBREW TEXT[1]

I

1. *Title.*

The Words of Qoheleth the son of David, king in Jerusalem. 1

2. *Theme of the Book.*

A mere breath, saith Qoheleth, a mere breath—the whole is a breath. 2

3. *The subject stated.*

What profit hath a man in all his toil which he toileth under the sun? 3

4—11. *The sameness of Nature.*

A generation goeth, and a generation cometh—but the earth standeth sure for ever. 4
And the sun shineth forth, and the sun setteth, and goeth panting to his place where he shineth forth. 5
Going towards south, and circling towards north, circling, circling, is the wind going, and on its circuits returneth the wind. 6
All the torrents are going towards the sea, but the sea is not full; towards the place whither the torrents are going, thither are they going again. 7
All things are labouring to weariness—no one can tell them (all); eye will not be satisfied in seeing, nor ear be filled by hearing. 8
That which hath been is that which shall be, and that which hath been done is that which shall be done; and there is nothing new at all under the sun. 9
If there be a thing whereof one saith, See this! It is new!—it hath been already in the ages which were before us. 10
There is no remembrance of the former (generations), and also of the latter which shall be—there will be no remembrance of them among those that come after. 11

[1] The object of this translation is not to reproduce the Book in either the best, or the most popular, English, but solely to give in a consecutive form the rendering preferred in each case in the Notes. Variations from the Masoretic text are marked by †. Words printed in clarendon type are additions by Qoheleth's friend and editor.

12—15. *The futility of the world in general.*

12 I Qoheleth was king over Israel in Jerusalem. | And I gave my
13 heart to question and to explore by (my) wisdom, about every-
thing that hath been done under the heavens†—an ill ⌜business
(which) God hath given to the sons of men to be busy therewith⌝.
14 I have seen all the deeds which have been done under the sun,
and, behold, the whole is a breath, and striving after wind.
15 Crooked! It cannot become straight. And a deficit! It cannot
be numbered in full.

16—18. *And wisdom itself brings sorrow.*

16 My deliberate conviction is, Lo, I have gotten me great wisdom
above all that preceded me (in rule) over Jerusalem, and my
17 heart hath had experience of much wisdom and knowledge. So
did I give my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and
18 folly. I know that this also is striving after wind. | For in much
wisdom is much vexation, and he that shall increase knowledge
shall increase sorrow.

II

1—11. *More material joys unsatisfying.*

1 I thought in my heart, Go now, I will test thee with joy, so
2 take thy fill of pleasure. And, lo, that also is a breath. | To laughter
3 I said, Mad! And to joy, What doest thou? | I explored with my
heart, attracting my body with wine, my heart guiding (me) with
wisdom, and taking hold of folly, till I could see which (of them) is
good for the sons of men, that they should do under the heavens
4 during the sum total of the days of their life. I made my works great.
5 I built me houses, I planted me vineyards, | I made me gardens
and closes, and I planted in them trees of every (kind of) fruit.
6 I made me pools of water to water therefrom a forest sprouting
7 with trees. I acquired menservants and maidservants, and I had
homeborn (servants). Also great possessions of herds and flocks
8 I had, above all who were before me in Jerusalem. I gathered
me also silver and gold, and the personal property of kings and
(specialities from) the provinces. I appointed me minstrels male
and female, and the delights of the sons of men, concubines very
9 many. So I was great, and grew ever greater than all that
preceded me in Jerusalem, also my wisdom stood fast for me.
10 And everything that mine eyes asked for, I kept not back from
them. I withheld not my heart from any joy, for my heart was
finding joy out of all my toil—and this was my share from all
11 my toil. So I turned (my face) on all my works which my hands
made, and on the toil which I had toiled to make, and, lo, the
whole was a breath and striving after wind, and there was no
profit under the sun.

12. *Transition to consider wisdom and folly, for the king has opportunity!* (Possibly *v.* 12 *b* should follow *v.* 11.)

And I turned to see wisdom and madness and folly. For 12
what (can) the man (do) who cometh after the king? (Even)
that which (men) have already done.

13—17. *Wisdom is better, but wise men and fools die alike.*

Then I saw that wisdom hath profit over folly, like the profit 13
of light over darkness. As for the wise man, his eyes are in his 14
head, but the fool walketh on in darkness, but I myself know that
one chance chanceth to them all. So I said in my heart, Like 15
the chance of the fool, so to me also will it chance, and why
am I then wise in excess? So I spake in my heart that this also
is a breath. For there is no remembrance of the wise man, together 16
with the fool, for ever; seeing that already (in) the days to come
the whole is forgotten —and how doth the wise man die together
with the fool! So I hated life, for the work that hath been wrought 17
under the sun is grievous unto me. For the whole is a breath
and striving after wind.

18—21. *A fool may inherit a wise man's labour.*

So I hated all my toil which I toiled under the sun, for I shall 18
leave it unto the man who shall be after me, | and who knoweth 19
whether he will be a wise man or a fool —and he shall have rule
over all my toil which I have toiled, and in which I have shown
wisdom, under the sun. This also is a breath. | So I turned about 20
to cause my heart to despair concerning all the toil which I toiled
under the sun. For if there be a man whose toil is in wisdom 21
and in knowledge and in aptitude—then to a man who has not
toiled in it shall he give it as his share. This also is a breath,
and a great evil.

22—25. *Let the worker find his joy in his work—for God gives this.*

For what cometh to the man (at the price) of all his toil and of 22
the striving of his heart, which he is toiling under the sun? For 23
all his days his occupation is sorrows and vexation, (and) even
in the night his heart resteth not—this also is a breath.

There is nothing better in the case of a man than† that he 24
should eat and drink and let himself find pleasure in his toil—this
also have I myself seen that it is from the hand of God.

For who will eat and who will feel, apart from Him†? 25

26. *God's care for him who pleases Him.*

For to a man who is good in His sight He giveth wisdom and 26
knowledge and joy, but to the sinner He giveth (as) a business
to gather and to store, that he may give to one who is good in
the sight of God. This also is a breath and striving after wind.

III

1—8. *Everything has its time.*

1 For everything there is a season, and a time for every concern
under the sun.
2 A time to bear (children), and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to uproot what hath been planted.
3 A time to kill, and a time to heal;
A time to break down (buildings), and a time to build.
4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
A time of lamenting and a time of dancing.
5 A time to cast stones, and a time of gathering stones;
A time to embrace, and a time to abstain from embracing.
6 A time to seek (fresh business) and a time to destroy;
A time to keep and a time to cast away.
7 A time to rend, and a time to sew;
A time to be silent, and a time to speak.
8 A time to love, and a time to hate;
A time of war, and a time of peace.

9—15. *No real satisfaction in anything one does.*

9 What is the profit of the worker in that in which he toileth?
10 I have seen the business which God hath given to the sons of
11 men to be busy therewith. The whole hath He made beautiful
in its time; also He hath set eternity in their heart, in such a way
that a man cannot find out the work which God hath done, from
12 the beginning even unto the end. I know that there is no good
(thing existing) among them save (for a man) to rejoice and enjoy
13 himself in his life. And also (for) every man—that he eat, and
drink, and gain pleasure in all his toil, is the gift of God. I know
14 that all God doeth—that shall be for ever; to it one cannot add,
and from it one cannot take away; and God hath caused men to
15 be in fear of Him. That which hath been was already, and that
which is to be hath already been; and God will seek again what
has been driven away.

16, 17. *Much apparent injustice, but God has it all in mind.*

16 And, moreover, I have seen under the sun the place of judge-
ment, (that) there (sat) wickedness, and the place of righteousness,
17 (that) there (sat) transgression†. **I said in mine heart, The righteous and the wicked shall God judge, for there is a time for every concern, and a judgement† about all the work.**

18—22. *It is not certain that man has more life after death than a beast. Let each then find joy in his present work.*

18 I said in mine heart with reference to the sons of men—God is
for proving them, and for showing† them† that they are beasts.
19 For the sons of men are a chance, and the beast is a chance,

even one chance have they, as this dieth so dieth that, and all have one spirit, and the man hath no profit over the beast, for the whole is a breath. The whole is going on to one place; the whole was 20
from the dust, and the whole returneth to the dust. [Who knoweth 21
the spirit of the sons of men whether † it is going upwards, and the spirit of the beast, whether † it goeth downwards, to the earth?] So I saw that there is nothing better than that the 22
man should rejoice in his works, for that is his share. For who shall bring him (back) to enjoy what will be after him?

IV

1—16. Social Problems.

1—3. *The weak and oppressed.*

And again I saw all the oppressions which were being done 1
under the sun, and lo! the tears of the oppressed, who had no comforter, (while) from the side of their oppressors (goeth forth) power †. So I praised the dead who have already died more than 2
the living who are living still. But better than they both is he 3
who hath not yet been (born), who hath not seen the ill work which hath been done under the sun.

4. *Success brings envy.*

And I saw all toil and all the skilfulness of work, that it (meaneth) 4
envy of a man by his neighbour. This also is a breath and striving after wind.

5, 6. *A lazy fool.*

The fool foldeth his hands—and eateth his (very) flesh: | Better 5
(he says) is a handful in quietness than two handfuls by toil, and 6
striving after wind.

7, 8. *The solitary worker.*

And again I saw (an instance of) mere futility under the sun. | There 7 8
is one (alone) without a second, without son also or brother, and there is no end to all his toil, his eye also is not satisfied with wealth —then for whom (saith he) am I toiling, and depriving myself of good? This also is a breath, and an ill business.

9—12. *Two are better than one.*

Two are better than one; for they (surely) have a good reward 9
for their toil. For if they fall, the one will raise his fellow up, but 10
alas for him who is (only) the one, who falleth, and there is no second to raise him up. Also, if two lie down together, then they 11
will be warm, but how shall one have warmth? And if (a man) 12
overpower him who is (only) the one, yet the two withstand him. And the threeply cord is not quickly snapped asunder.

13—16. *The transitoriness of popularity.*

13 Better is a youth (who is) a pauper but wise than a king (who
is) old but foolish, who knoweth not how to receive admonition
14 any more. For out of prison he has gone forth to be king, though
15 even in his kingdom he was poor by birth. I saw all the living
who take their way under the sun, (following) with the second
16 youth who standeth up in his stead. There is no end of all the
people, (even) of all (them) in front of whom he was—yet they
that come after shall not rejoice in him. For this also is a breath,
and striving after wind.

V

1—7 (iv. 17—v. 6, Heb.). *Proper worship.*

1[1] Keep thy feet when thou goest to the house of God, for drawing
nigh to hearing is better than fools giving a sacrifice. For they
2 (1) know not when they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and
let not thy heart be quick in uttering a word before God; for God
is in the heavens and thou upon the earth, therefore let thy words
3 (2) be few. For the dream cometh by much business, and a fool's
4 (3) voice by many words. "When thou shalt vow a vow unto God
be not slack to pay it" (Deut. xxiii. 21), for (He hath) no interest
5 (4) in fools; that which thou vowest, pay! Better is it that thou
shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow, and shouldest
6 (5) not pay. Permit not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to incur the
penalty of sin, and say not before the angel that it was unintentional. Why should God be angry at thy voice, and ruin the work
7 (6) of thy hands? For in the multitude ⌜of business† come⌝ dreams,
and worthless follies, in many words—but fear God.

8, 9 (7, 8). *Injustice in one place is due to the whole system of civil government.*

8 (7) If thou seest in the province oppression of poor, and violence
in judgement and righteousness, marvel not at the matter; for
each higher (official) is watching his subordinate, and there are
9 (8) higher over them; and the profit of (the) land is among the whole
(of them) —even the wild land when cultivated has a king.

10 (9)—CH. VI. YET WEALTH CANNOT SATISFY.

10 (9)—**12** (11). *In its possession.*

10 (9) Whoso loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, and he
who clingeth lovingly to abundance hath not increase. This also
11 (10) is a breath. When prosperity increaseth, they that devour it are
increased, and what prize hath its owner save his eyes seeing it?

[1] iv. 17 Heb.

Sweet is the sleep of the labouring man, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the wealthy doth not suffer him to sleep. 12 (11)

13 (12)—**17** (16). *It may be lost when the owner is too old to repair its loss.*

There is a festering evil (which) I have seen under the sun, wealth kept of its owner to his ill. And (suppose) that wealth is lost in (some) ill business, and he hath begotten a son—there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth from his mother's womb, naked shall he go again, as he came; and he shall not receive any thing for his toil which he may carry away in his hand. And this also is a festering evil, every (man)†, just as he came, so shall he go; and what profit hath he, that he toileth for the wind? Also all his days he eateth in darkness, and he is sore vexed, and anxiety brings† his sickness. 13 (12) 14 (13) 15 (14) 16 (15) 17 (16)

18 (17)—**20** (19). *Therefore take enjoyment as from God.*

Behold, that which I (myself) have seen to be good, that it is comely (for a man) to eat and to drink and to enjoy himself in all his toil which he toileth under the sun the total number of the days of his life which God hath given him. For that is his share. Also in the case of every man to whom God hath given wealth and possessions, and hath given him power to eat of it, and to receive his share, and to rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God. For he will not much remember the days of his life, for God responds in (giving him) the joy of his heart. 18 (17) 19 (18) 20 (19)

VI

1—6. *Again, a man may not be able to enjoy his wealth.*

There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and heavy is it on men. A man to whom God giveth wealth and possessions and splendour, who lacketh nothing for himself of all that he craveth, but God giveth him not power to eat of it, for a stranger eateth it—this is a breath and an evil disease. If a man beget a hundred (children), and live many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied by prosperity, and further he hath had no burial—I say, an untimely birth is better than he. For in a breath it cometh, and in darkness it goeth, and in darkness is its name covered. Also the sun hath it not seen, neither hath it had any knowledge—this hath more rest than that. And if he hath lived a thousand years twice over, and hath not seen prosperity, are not all going to one place? 1 2 3 4 5 6

7—9. *Present enjoyment is better than desire.*

7 All a man's toil is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not
8 filled. For what advantage hath the wise man over the fool?
What (advantage) hath the poor man when he knoweth how to
9 walk in the presence of the living? Better is the eyes' sight than
the appetite's roaming—this also is a breath and striving after
wind.

10—12. *Therefore in view of the supremacy of God enjoy the present moment.*

10 What hath been—the name thereof hath been already pro-
nounced, and what he, (even) man, is, standeth known; and he
11 cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he. For (seeing) it
is (a fact that) many words increase emptiness, what advantage
12 hath a man? For who knows what is best for a man in life, (in)
the total number of the days of his breath-like life, for he maketh
them like a shadow? (For) who shall tell a man what shall be after
him under the sun?

VII

1—12. *Better things.*

1 Better is name than nard, and the death day than one's birth-
2 day. Better is it to go to a house of mourning than to a house of
feasting, inasmuch as that is the end of every man, and the
3 living (man) will lay it to his heart. Better is vexation than
4 laughter, for by sadness of countenance is the heart glad. The
heart of wise men is in a house of mourning, and the heart of
5 fools in a house of feasting. Better is it to hear the rebuke of a
6 wise man, than a man who hears the song of fools. For as the
sound of thorns under the pot so is the laughter of fools. And
7 this also is a fleeting breath, | that oppression turneth a wise man's
8 brain, and a gift destroyeth the understanding. Better is the end
of a word than its beginning; better is the patient in spirit than
9 the proud in spirit. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be vexed, for
10 vexation resteth in the bosom of fools. Do not say, What is (the
cause) that the former days were better than these, for it is not
11 out of wisdom that thou hast asked this question. Good is wisdom
together with an inheritance, and an advantage in the sight of
12 them that see the sun. For wisdom is a shelter (and) money is
a shelter, but the advantage of knowledge (is that) wisdom
preserveth the life of its owner.

13, 14. *God is supreme; enjoy prosperity; no fault can be found with Him.*

13 See thou the work of God! For who can make that straight
14 which He hath made crooked? In the day of prosperity enjoy

thyself, and in the day of evil consider; this also hath God made corresponding to that, to the end that a man should not find fault with Him.

15—18. *Even in apparent injustice—it is the man's fault. Mix freely with both righteous and wicked.*

All (this) have I seen in the days of my fleeting existence— 15
there is a righteous man perishing in his righteousness, and there
is a wicked man prolonging (his life) in his evil-doing. Be not 16
righteous overmuch, and play not the wise man to excess; why
shouldest thou lose thy senses? Do not be very wicked, and do 17
not be a fool; why shouldest thou die out of thy time? Good is it 18
that thou shouldest lay hold of this (one), and also from that (other)
withdraw not thou thine hand. For he that feareth God will fulfil
his obligation as regards them both.

19. *A gloss.*

[Wisdom is a strength to the wise man, more than ten rulers 19
who are in a city.]

20—22. *For every one does wrong sometimes.*

For as for man, there is none righteous in the land, who doeth 20
good and sinneth not. Also to all the words that men speak do 21
not pay attention, lest thou hear thy servant cursing thee. For 22
also many times doth thy heart know that thou also hast cursed
others.

23—29. *The difficulty of attaining true wisdom, especially in view of gross wickedness. Indeed wickedness is almost universal, I have rarely found a good man, and a good woman never. But this is not God's fault.*

All this have I tested by (my) wisdom. I said, I will be wise, 23
but it (remained) far from me. Far off is that which hath been, 24
even exceeding deep—who shall find it out? I turned about, and 25
my heart (was set) to know and to explore, even seeking wisdom
and (the) *rationale* (of things); and to know that wickedness is
folly, and that foolishness is madness. And I find (a thing) more 26
bitter than death, the woman who is snares, and her heart is nets,
her hands fetters. He who is good in the sight of God shall escape
from her, but a sinner shall be taken by her. Behold, this have 27
I found, saith Qoheleth, (laying) one thing to another to find out
the *rationale*, | which my soul hath still sought, but I have not 28
found. One man out of a thousand I have found, but a woman
among all these have I not found. Only, behold this have I found; 29
that God made man upright, but they sought out many contrivances.

VIII

1—4. *The wise man and the king.*

1 Who is like the wise man? And who knoweth the interpretation
of a thing? A man's wisdom will make his countenance benignant,
2 and the harshness of his countenance shall be changed†. The
king's command, keep! and that with regard to the oath (in the
3 name) of God. Do not be hasty to go out from his presence; do
not stay (firm) in an evil thing; for all that pleaseth him he will do.
4 Forasmuch as the word of a king (hath) power, and who shall
say unto him, What doest thou?

5—8. *Do each thing in its time, for death comes.*

5 Whoso keepeth the commandment shall experience no ill, and
6 a wise man's heart knoweth time and judgement. For to every
concern there is a time and judgement, for a man's misery is (ever)
7 great upon him. For he doth not know what shall be, for how it
8 shall be, who can tell him? There is no man that hath power
over the wind, to restrain the wind, and there is no power over
the day of death, nor is there substitution in (that) war; neither
shall wickedness deliver its owner.

9—15. *There is sometimes apparent injustice, but find gladness in your work.*

9 All this have I seen, and applied my heart to every work which
hath been done under the sun, (there is) a time wherein one man
10 hath power over another to his (own) hurt. And then I saw
wicked men who were borne† to their graves†, and they that
had done right went away from the Holy Place, and were for-
gotten in the city. This also is a breath.

[**11—13.** *Justice will not fail. Perhaps an interpolation.*]

11 **Because sentence is not executed speedily on the work (wrought)**
of evil, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them
12 **to work evil. Because a sinner (may be) working evil a hundred**
times and prolonging his (days)—surely also I know that it shall
be well with them that fear God, because they fear before Him;
13 **but it shall not be well with the wicked (man), and he shall not**
prolong his days; as a shadow is he who feareth not before God.

14 There is a futile thing which is done upon the earth, that there
are righteous unto whom it happeneth like the work of the wicked,
and there are wicked unto whom it happeneth like the work of
15 the righteous. I said that this also is futility. | So I praised joy,
for there is nothing good for a man under the sun save to eat and
to drink and to be glad, and that this should accompany him
in his toil (during) the days of his life which God hath given
him under the sun.

16, 17. *God's work is past finding out.*

When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the 16
business which hath been done on the earth (for also by day and
by night he seeth not sleep with his eyes), then I (ever) saw all 17
the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work which
hath been done under the sun, forasmuch as the man may toil
in inquiring, yet will not find out; and also, if the wise man
purposeth to know it, he will not be able to find out.

IX

1—6. *Example of the inability of man to find out God's ways, for ill happens to all, and the dead have no more share on earth.*

For all this have I laid to my heart, even to prove all this, 1
that the righteous, and the wise, and their works are in the hand
of God, whether (God's) love or hatred man knoweth not; all
in front of them is a mere breath†. Inasmuch† as there is to 2
all one chance, to the righteous and to the wicked†, and to the
clean and to the unclean, and to him that sacrificeth and to him
that sacrificeth not; as is the good so is the sinner, (and) he that
sweareth (lightly) is as he who respecteth an oath. This is an 3
ill in all that is done under the sun, that there is one chance
to all, yea also, (that) the heart of the sons of men is full of ill,
and madness is in their heart while they live, and afterwards—to
the dead! For to him who is joined to all the living there is hope, 4
for as for a dog when living—he is better than the dead lion.
For the living know that they will die, but the dead know not 5
anything, and they have no more a reward, for the memory of
them is forgotten. Both their love and their hatred and their 6
envy—each hath already perished; and no more for ever have
they any share in all that is done under the sun.

7—10. *With death approaching, enjoy thy life, and work hard.*

Go! eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a glad 7
heart, for God hath already accepted thy actions. At all times 8
let thy garments be white, and let not oil be lacking on thy head.
Enjoy life with (the) wife whom thou lovest, all the days of thy 9
fleeting life which God hath given thee under the sun, [(even)
all the days of thy fleeting (life)], for that is thy portion in life
and in thy toil which thou toilest under the sun. All that thy 10
hand findeth to do, do (it) with thy might, for there is no work
or reckoning or knowledge or wisdom in She'ôl whither thou art
going.

11, 12. *Though no reward for work is guaranteed, and death may come any time.*

11 I returned and saw under the sun that the race is not to the
swift, nor the battle to the strong, and also bread is not to the
wise, and also wealth is not to the understanding, and also favour
is not to them that have knowledge—for time and (ill) event
12 chanceth to them all. For also a man doth not know his time, like
the fish who have been caught in a [evil] net, and like the birds
that have been caught in the gin; like them are the sons of men
snared at a time of evil, when it falleth upon them suddenly.

13—16. *An instance in which wisdom brought no personal advantage.*

13 This also have I seen as wisdom under the sun, and it is great,
14 to my thinking. (There is) a little city with but few men in it,
and there cometh unto it a great king who surroundeth it and
15 buildeth great siege-works† against it, and there is found in it a
man who is a beggar but wise, and he delivereth the city by his
16 wisdom—and no man remembereth that beggar! So I said,
Better is wisdom than might, but the wisdom of the beggar is
despised, and his cause is not heard.

17—X. 3. *Wisdom is powerful, but a little folly will outweigh it.*

17 The words of (the) wise (spoken) in quiet are heard more than
18 the cry of a ruler (or leader) among (his) fools. Better is wisdom
than weapons of war, but one sin† destroyeth much good.

X

1 A fly dieth†, and causeth the ointment of the perfumer to stink,
to ferment; so is a little folly weightier than wisdom, than honour.
2 A wise man's heart is at his right hand, and a fool's heart at his
3 left. Yea also when the fool walketh in the road his understanding
is lacking, and he saith to everyone that he is a fool.

4—7. *Sayings about rulers.*

4 If the spirit of the ruler rise against thee, set not thy place
5 aside, for composure setteth great offences aside. There is an
evil (which) I have seen under the sun, like an inadvertence which
6 proceedeth from the ruler; folly is set in heights, great† and rich
7 sit in low estate. I have seen slaves on horses, and princes walking
like slaves on the ground.

8, 9. *No work without its dangers.*

8 He that diggeth a pit shall fall into it, and he that breaketh
9 down a wall-fence, a serpent shall bite him. He that moveth
stones shall be hurt therewith; he that cleaveth wood sets himself
in danger thereby.

10, 11. *The advantage of forethought.*

If the iron be blunt and he (the woodman) do not whet (the) edge, then will he put to more strength, and an advantage for giving success is wisdom. If the serpent bite when there is no charming, then there is no advantage for the charmer. 10 11

12—15. *Contrast the pretensions of a fool.*

The words of a wise man's mouth (mean) favour, but the lips of a fool will swallow him up. The beginning of the words of his mouth is folly, and the end of his talk is mischievous madness. And though the fool may multiply words, the man (that heareth) knoweth not what shall be, and that which shall be after him who shall tell him? The toil of fools wearieth him (the fool)—for he knoweth not how to go to (his) city. 12 13 14 15

16, 17. *Frivolous and good rulers.*

Woe to thee, O land, whose king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning. Happy art thou, O land, whose king is of high character, and thy princes eat at proper time, with manliness and not with carousal. 16 17

18, 19. *The need and the advantage of work.*

By sluggishness the beam-work sinketh in, and by slackness of hands the house leaketh. For laughter is food prepared, and wine maketh life glad, but money answereth all (desires). 18 19

20. *As regards those in power—Be silent.*

Even in thy mind curse not (the) king, and in thy bedchambers curse not (the) rich, for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings may tell the saying. 20

XI

1—8. *Further examples in encouragement of foresight and prudence; venture, work, rejoice—in view of death.*

Send forth thy bread upon the face of the water, for in many days shalt thou find it. Give a share to seven, and also to eight, for thou dost not know what evil shall be upon the earth. If the clouds be full, they pour out rain upon the earth, and if a tree fall on the south (side) or on the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it (is) †. He that observeth wind shall not sow, and he that contemplates the clouds shall not reap. As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit with † the bones in the womb of her that is with child, even so thou dost not know 1 2 3 4 5

6 the work of God who maketh all (there is). In the morning sow
thy seed, and at even let not thy hand rest; for thou dost not
know which shall turn out right, this or that, or whether they
7 both shall be alike good. And the light is sweet, and pleasant
8 is it for the eyes to see the sun. For if the man liveth many years,
let him rejoice in them all, but let him remember the days of
darkness, for they shall be many. Every one who cometh is a
mere breath.

9—XII. 8. *Enjoy life, bearing in mind (a) God's judgement, (b) the coming of old age and death.*

9 Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart gladden
thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine
heart, and in the vision of thine eyes—**but know that with respect**
10 **to all these (things) God will bring thee into (His) judgement.** And
remove vexation from thine heart, and put away evil from thy
flesh, for youth and manly vigour are a mere breath.

XII

1 **And remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth** as long as
the evil days come not, and the years draw nigh, of which thou
2 sayest, I have in them no pleasure. As long as the sun groweth
not dark nor the light, nor the moon, nor the stars, nor the clouds
3 return after the rain: namely, in the day that the keepers of
the house quake; and the strong men become crooked; and the
grinding women be idle because they produce little; and they
4 that look out of the windows be darkened; and the doors be shut
in the street when the sound of the grinding is low; and† the
voice of the bird grows thin† and all the notes of music grow low.
5 Also they shall be afraid of (that which is) high, and terrors shall
be in the road, and the almond shall blossom, and the locust
shall drag itself along, and the caper-berry fail (to stimulate).
For the man is going to his everlasting home, and the mourners
6 have already begun to go round the streets. As long as the silver
cord be not snapped†, nor the golden bowl be crushed†, nor the
pitcher be shattered at the spring, nor the wheel be crushed to
7 pieces at the cistern; and the dust return to the earth as it was,
and the spirit return unto God who gave it.
8 A mere breath, saith Qoheleth, the whole is a breath.

9—14. EPILOGUE.

9, 10. *Encomium of Qoheleth and his efforts.*

9 **And, further, because Qoheleth was wise, he continued to teach**
knowledge (to) the people, and weighed, and investigated, (and)
10 **set many proverbs in order. Qoheleth sought to find words (in**
which men take) pleasure, and wrote† words of truth uprightly.

11. *Value of the words of the wise, which have their final source in God.*

The words of the wise are as goads, as nails well fastened, 11
holders of stores, (which words) have been given from one Shepherd.

12. *Personal advice to a young student.*

And further, against those (two things), my son, be warned, 12
of making many books there is no end, and much devotion (to study) is a weariness of the flesh.

13, 14. *Conclusion. To fear God is everyone's duty and privilege—for He is the Judge.*

This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard. Fear God, 13
and keep His commandments, for this is (or, fits) every man.
For every work shall God bring into judgement, concerning every 14
hidden thing, whether it (i.e. every work) be good or evil.

INDEXES

I. GENERAL

Note—E. throughout the Indexes stands for Ecclesiastes

Aben Ezra, 21
Abraham in legend, 5
Acts xxiii. 8, xlvi
Additional Notes, 33, 48, 56, 67
Almond, two kinds of, 147
Alms promised in Synagogue on Sabbath, 60
Angel, the, xl, 60
Apocalyptists not considered by E., 27. *See* Eschatology
Aqiba insists that every *'eth* has an inclusive force, lii
Aquila, 9, 89; his version or versions, li—liii. *See* Septuagint
Aramaic Versions of E., l *sq.*; Dr Burkitt's theory that Aram. was the original language of E., l. *See also* 80
Asceticism, warning against too much, xli
Author. *See* Qoheleth
Avestan, 18

Baba ben Buta appeals to E. x. 20, xii
Baldensperger, P. J., 19
Bauer und Leander, *Historische Grammatik*, 11
Beasts, fate of, xlv, 45 *sq.*; men are like, 44; their "spirit," 46
Bed, 54
Benzinger, 65, 153
Bickell, G., his theory of original form of E., xvi—xviii
Birds, 145
Birt, T., on forms of early MSS., xvii
Boethos, xlvii
Box, G. H., on Sadducees, xlvi
Bread upon the waters, 130 *sq.*
Buddhism, supposed influence on E., xxxv
Burkitt, Dr, supposes an Aramaic original, l. *See also* 3, 71, 96

Caietan quoted, 2, 107
Canonicity of E., never doubted by Christians, ix; discussed by Jews, xi *sq.*
Caper-berry, 149
Cattle picketed in Central Africa, 159
Chākām, the, theories of Siegfried, xix; and McNeile, xx; tested by grammatical and lexical forms and phrases, xxi; and by contents, xxiii *sq.*
Chapters in Hebrew Bible not originally Jewish, 57
Chāsîd, the, theories of Siegfried, xix; and McNeile, xx; tested by grammatical and lexical forms and phrases, xxi; and by contents, xxiv *sq.*
Clean and unclean persons, xl
Cleanthes, *Hymn to Zeus*, xxxii, 80
Commentaries used for this edition, liv
Common-sense inculcated, xl *sq.*
Contents of E. as evidence of date, xiv
Copernicus said to be condemned by E., 5
Cornill quoted, ix
Creator, 140

Dancing, 36
Date of E., xiii—xv
Death and beyond, xliii—xlv
Declare, 101
"Defile the hands," xi

Delitzsch on the date of E., xiv
Doctrinal and ethical teaching of E., xxxvi—xlv
Duty to others, xli
Dziatzko on forms of early MSS., xvii

Earth, stability of the, 5
Ecclesiastes, meaning of word, 1
Ecclesiasticus, meaning of word, xxv; its relation to E., xxv—xxviii; date, xv
Editor of E. accentuates the orthodoxy of Qoheleth, xlix
Egypt, supposed place where E. was written, xv *sq.*
Egyptians, believers in life after death, xliii *sq.*
Epicureanism, supposed influence on E., xxxiii *sq.*
Eschatology, E. shows no interest in, 27; perhaps rebuts statements about it, 124
Essenes, 103 *sq.*
Eternity, 39
'eth, li *sq.*, 42, 51, 76
Ethical. See Doctrinal *and* Ethical
Exactions of an oriental state, 61

Flies, dead, 115 *sq.*
Folly (and wisdom), xliii
Fool, 52
Frazer, J. G., 36, 72

Gilgamesh, epic of, 69, 107
God, the doctrine of, xxxvi—xl; as Moral Governor, in this life and after, xxxviii—xl; His approval necessary for full enjoyment, 106
Government, the, xlii
Greek versions, li—liii
Grief, meaning, 15

Haggada, 17
Harclean Syriac, li
Heart, meaning, 10
Hellenistic towns, possible knowledge by E., xlii, 83
Heraclitus on the world, xxxi *sq.*
Hooker, *Eccles. Pol.* I. ii. 2, 101
Horace represents Epicurean thought, xxxiii *sq.*
House of God, xl

Ibn Yachya on vii. 14, 80
Imitatio, I. i. 2, 155
Injustice, various kinds, xlii *sq.*
Inventions, 89

Jerome, accepts the canonicity of E., ix *sq.*; says Hebrews accept E. as authoritative because of ch. xii., x; his commentary, liii *sq.*
Jerusalem, why mentioned in E., 3; its modern water supply, 19
Josephus, probably included E. in his canon, xiii; on the Sadducees, xlvi *sq.*
Judgement by God in this life and after, xxxviii—xl, xlv

King, the Great, 112
King and Wise man, 89—92
Knight, G. A. F., xv *sq.*, 108
Koheleth. See Qoheleth
König, *Stilistik u.s.w.*, xxi *sq.*
Koran, Sura vi, 5
Kthîb and *Qrî*, 104, 151

La Bruyère, 118
Lamp, 65; hanging, at Leontopolis, 152; symbol of life, 152
Land, taxation of, 67
Language and style of E. examined for light on date, xiii *sq.*; and style of the *Chākām* and *Chāsîd* examined, xx—xxii
Latin versions, liii *sq.*
Lattices, 143
Lay of the Harper, 108, 141
Levi ben Gerson, R., 47
Levy, Ludwig, attributes E. to Zadoq or Boethos, xlvii; other theories of his about Qoheleth, *ibid.*
Locust, 148 *sq.*
Logion v., 121

Louis XIV, 10
Lucretius, represents Epicurean thought, xxxiii *sq.*

Mahaffy, Sir J. P., xxx
Man, doctrine of, xl—xlv
Man, every, 40
Manuscripts, early forms of, xvi *sq.*
Maundrell, 119
Mazarin, 20
McNeile, theory of origin of E., xix *sq.*, and *passim*
Money unsatisfying, 62—73
Mourners, professional, xliv
Mourning ceremonies, xliv, 36, 37, 74, 150 *sq.*

Name, in primitive thought, 72, 74
Nature, E. an observer of, xxxviii
New Testament, supposed references to E. in, xiii

Oath, xl, 103; more frequent in East than in West, 83
Oath of God, the, 91
Oesterley, W. O. E., xi, xxvi, xxviii, xliii
Old age, allegorical description of, 141
Origin of present form of E., xvi—xxv

Pahlavî, 97
Papyri, Aramaic, of 5th century B.C. contain Greek words, xv
Park, 18
Pâsêq, 11, 49
Peculiar, meaning, 21
Peg, 158, 160
Penitence, absence of this is against authorship by Solomon in his old age, xiii
Perfume on hair, 108
Personal existence after death assumed, and accepted, by E., xlv
Peshitta, l
Petachiah, Rabbi, 121
Philo has no certain reference to E., xiii
Philosophy, non-Jewish, is E. dependent on? xxx—xxxvi
Phoenician inscription, 4
Phylacteries, 138
Pithgâm, 97
Place where E. was written, xv *sq.*
Pools of Solomon, 19
Prayer, in general, xl; perhaps a prayer-leader, xl, 114
Pyrrho, supposed influence of, on E., xxxiv *sq.*

Qoheleth, meaning of the word, 1 *sq.*; insists on heart-felt religion, ix; not a philosopher in the technical sense, but purely Jewish, xxxv *sq.*; was he a Sadducee? xlvi *sq.*; probable facts about him, xlviii *sq.*; his book an unsystematic collection of thoughts on moral subjects, xlix
Qrî and *Kthîb*, 104, 151

Rashi on "the angel," 60
Rich and poor, xlii
Roads in Palestine, 125, 147
Rossetti, Christina G., lvi
Rûach, meaning of, 46, 154

Sabbath, money not to be carried on, 60
Sacrifices, xl, 58; Qoheleth's high opinion of him who sacrifices, 103
Sadducee, Qoheleth supposed to be a, xlvi *sq.*; Doctrines of Sadducees, *ibid.*
Satisfaction not obtainable, xli
Septuagint, in E. by member of school which afterwards produced Aquila's version, li *sq.*
Serpents, 120 *sq.*; charming, 123
She'ôl, xlv, 47, 109
Siegfried, theory of origin of E., xix
Simeon ben Shetach appeals to E. vii. 12, xii
Sinfulness of man, xli

Social questions, E.'s deep interest due to his religion, xlii, 49—56
Solomon, improbability that he wrote E., xiii—xv; name not in E., 3; why chosen as the spokesman, *ibid.*; the fiction of, is revealed, 28
Solomon's Pools, 19
South, the, 5
Spirit. *See Rûach*
Stoicism, supposed influence on E., xxxi—xxxiii
Substitution in war against death not possible, 94
Sun, under the, xxx, 4
σύν, in LXX of E., lii
Symmachus' version, liii
Syro-Hexaplar Syriac, li

Targum, li
Taylor, C., 142
Ten rulers in Hellenistic towns, xlii, 83
Test. Reuben, ii. 4, 22
Theodore of Mopsuestia attributes to E. a low degree of inspiration, x
Theodotion's version, liii
Thomson, W. M., *The Land and the Book*, 147 *sq.*
Translation of E., 165—179
Tree, fallen, supposed to refer to state after death, 133
Tristram, H. B., *Natural History of the Bible*, 149
Tyler, T., xxxi

Vanity, meaning, 3
Versions of E., l—liv
Vows, xl, 59—61
Vulgate, liv

Water-supply, its importance for gardens in the East, 19. *See* Jerusalem
Weariness, 7
Weather, xxxviii
White garments, 107 *sq.*
Wisdom and Folly, xliii, 23—27
Wisdom of Solomon, the, its relation to E., xxviii—xxx
Wise man and a king, 89—92
Women worse than men, xli; is woman inferior to man? 88
Work, pleasure in, xli
World, the, 39
Worship, xl

Xenophanes, supposed influence of, on E., xxxii

Zadoq, supposed author of E., xlvii

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II. LITERATURE, ETC. QUOTED

(*a*) Classical

Aristophanes, *Birds*, 49, 601, 130; *Clouds*, 1294, 6

Catullus, XLVII. 5, 126
Cicero, *Epp. ad Divers.* VII. 30, 100; *De Nat. Deor.* II. 140, 143; *Philipp.* II. 41, 126; *Tuscul. Disp.* I. XX. 46, 143; III. iv. 7, 15

Euripides, *Alc.* 394, 4

Horace, *de Art. Poet.* 173 *sq.*, 77; *Epp.* I. i. 53, 65, I. vi. 36—38, 129; *Od.* I. iv. 137; *Sat.* I. ix. 59 *sq.*, 29

Juvenal, *Sat.* X. 200—239, 146

Lucretius, VI. 631—637, 7

Marcus Aurelius, *Medit.* II. 3, 162; IV. 32, 34
Martial, VIII. 77. 3, 4, 108

Ovid, *Epp. ex Ponto*, II. ix. 47, 90; *Metamorph.* I. 381—413, 36

Publilius Syrus, saying attributed to, 139

Seneca, *Ep.* XXIV., 9
Sophocles, *Antigone*, 507, 92; *Œdip. Col.* 1225, 50

Terence, *Hauton Timorumenos*, III. i. 82, 100
Theognis, *Eleg.* I. 568 *sq.*, 136

(*b*) Semitic and Rabbinical

Ahikar, Story of, Syriac, II. 7, 148; II 49, 74; VIII. 41, 120; Arabic, II. 48, 74
Alphabet of Ben Sira, 131

Midrash, *Aboth d'R. Nathan*, A § 5, B § 10, xlvii; *Siphrê*, § 307, 80; on Deut. xxxii. 14, 17; *Lev. R.* on Lev. iv. 3, 158; on Lev. xv. 25, 90; *Tanchuma*, on Gen. xxv. 1, 147; *Pesiqta d'Rab Kahana*, § xxv, 145; *Pesiqta Rabbathi*, § 15, 33; *Eccles. R.* on iii. 5, 36; on v. 6 (5), 60; on vii. 7, 77; on viii. 8, 94; on x. 20, 130; on xi. 6, 135; on xii. 1, 141
Mishna, *Berakoth*, I. 1, 157; II. 1, 82; IX. 7 (5), 59; *Ma'ed Qaton*, III. 9, 150 *sq.*; *Nedarim*, III. 8 (9), 139; *Gittin*, IV. 5, 127; *Sanhedrin*, III. 3, 159; (*Aboth*) *Ethics of the Fathers*, I. 1, 77; I. 5 (6), 143; II. 2, 78; III. 20 (25), 111; *Yadaim*, III. 5 (6—9), on canonicity of E., xi

Pal. Talm. *Berakoth*, VII. 2 (p. 11^{b}), xii; *Sota*, II. 2 (p. 18 *a*), 141; *Qiddushin* (end), 138; *Sanhedrin*, X. 1 end, 159; X. 1 (28 *a*), 162

T. B. *Berakoth*, 8 *a*, 86; 18 *a*, *b*, 105; 23 *a*, 58; 43 *b*, 38; 61 *a*, 59; *Sabbath*, 30 *b*, on canonicity of E., xii; 87 *a*, 17; 140 *a*, 31; *Erubin*, 53 *b*, 125; 54 *a*, 138; *Yoma*, 38 *b*, 5; *Taanith*, 23 *a*, 53; *Chagiga*, 14 *a*, 17; *Yebamoth*, 63 *b*, 86; *Gittin*, 68 *a*, 33; *Baba Bathra*, 3 *b*, xii; *Sanhedrin*, 19 *a*, 150; 27 *a*, 136
Tosephta, *Yadaim*, II. 14, on canonicity of E., xii

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